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## NATURE AND CONVENTION IN THE DEMOCRATIC STATE

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### I

ONE of the most important contributions to political philosophy in recent times is the theory propounded by Lord Lindsay of Birker that the central feature of a democratic state is neither "sovereignty" nor the "General Will", but what he, perhaps unfortunately, calls "the constitution"; that is to say, the system of fundamental understandings which all the main groups constituting a society, including governments, observe as a matter of course. The purpose of this paper is twofold: firstly, to expound, to develop, and to clarify a view which in its essentials seems to me to have been unduly neglected; and secondly, to inquire concerning it whether or how far the fundamental understandings to which it refers have the character of social conventions, and how far they are rooted in what mediaeval writers would have described as the "law of nature". This latter inquiry will further provide an opportunity for reviewing the classical conceptions of nature and convention in contemporary terms, and for making certain observations on neglected aspects of the theory of the social contract.

Lindsay first approached his central conception through a criticism of the theory of sovereignty<sup>1</sup>; and in this we may follow him, though the conclusions which he reaches would be equally fatal to other political concepts, and particularly to

<sup>1</sup> In an address to a meeting of the Aristotelian Society, published in its Proceedings for 1923-4. It is restated in *The Modern Democratic State*, Ch. IX (1943).

that of the General Will. The theory of sovereignty, he observes, expresses fairly well the political facts of the seventeenth century absolute monarchies. In those days it was really true that the fundamental fact about a society was (to use the later words of Austin) that it was "in a state of habitual obedience" to "a determinate superior". In the person of the monarch all power was concentrated ("sovereignty is indivisible"), and law is to be recognized by the fact that the monarch has ordained it ("law is the command of the sovereign"). There was, it is true, and especially in England, a customary common law, which did not appear to have at any stage been commanded, but that could always be explained on the accepted principle, "What the sovereign permits, he commands". With this saving formula in reserve the lawyers of the seventeenth century found that the theory of sovereignty provided a fair account of their own political institutions. And legally it was extremely convenient. Lawyers naturally want to know how to distinguish law, which is enforceable by public authority, from custom, which is enforceable only by public opinion. And ordinary people, likewise, have a right to know by what sanction the demands made upon them are sustained.

The advocates of sovereignty have commonly tried to conciliate the opposition by being complaisant about the numbers or personnel of the sovereign. Even Hobbes, who set out his empirical reasons for preferring monarchy, refused to make monarchy a matter of principle—that, no doubt, was why the Restoration was less grateful to him than he thought he deserved. "One man, or *one assembly of men*", he writes, in defining sovereignty: either will do, so long as sovereignty is indivisible. What he hated was the dyarchy which, in his opinion, had been responsible for the Civil War; which power should be absolute did not much concern him, so long as *some* power was absolute. This concession, at a later stage, made it possible for professed democrats to use the theory of sovereignty for their own purposes; they expanded the unlimited sovereignty of the monarch into the unlimited sovereignty of



the people. But here a problem arises, one which was bound to arise from the moment that Hobbes made his light-hearted concession to "assemblies". How is one to discover what the will of an assembly is? In the case of a monarch it is simple: he only has to make up his own mind. But an assembly has, psychologically speaking, many minds; how are they to function as one? Only by means of a *convention* to the effect that the will of the majority shall count as the will of the whole. This, in fact, has been the hall-mark of a democratic society; and it has the great advantage of combining persistent difference of opinion with unity in action. But if it is accepted, the theory of sovereignty is in difficulties; for the convention of majority rule binds the ruler as surely as it binds the subject. A government defeated at the polls or on a vote of confidence in the House hands in its resignation, in compliance with a convention which it has not commanded, though it has the whole machinery of compulsion at its disposal. The convention, in fact, is anterior to any command; and this is completely opposed to the theory of sovereignty.

Once this principle is established, viz., that in a democratic society, in which many divergent wills have to function as one, there has to be a convention before there is a will of the so-called sovereign at all, the other and older objections to the theory of sovereignty all fall into place round a single natural centre. For example, there is the notorious difficulty of applying the doctrine of sovereignty to a federal society. The obvious fact about such a society is that the authority of its constituent elements is determined by the constitution. Sovereignty, then, should reside in those who have the power to change the constitution. In the United States the body so empowered is "two-thirds of both houses of Congress or by a special convention summoned for that purpose and a majority in three-quarters of the States' legislatures". This body has in fact issued 20 commands in some 160 years, and one of them has been the cancellation of another of them. Not, one would think, a very active sort of sovereign, nor one which can be said to receive "*habitual*" obedience. In Australia the

situation is more interesting, for proposed constitutional changes are referred to the people in a referendum. This is undoubtedly intended to conform to the doctrine of "popular sovereignty", and is one of the cases in which a new practice has arisen from a misdescription of the facts as they stood. But, in any case, both the American and the Australian practices are themselves prescribed in the constitution. Not only is the current practice of federal societies constitutionally regulated, but so also are the devices for constitutional reform.

Now it is an advantage for a theory to be able to describe a larger range of phenomena with greater simplicity; and a theory which can so describe federal societies is at an advantage against one which can be made to apply to them only by complicated supplementary devices. Thus it is preferable, because more economical, to say concerning democratic societies that the constitution, and not the sovereign, is the basic fact about them and the source of their authority. It is important, however, not to argue as if it were *only* the evidence of federal societies which invalidates the theory of sovereignty. As Lindsay observes (*Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1923-4, p. 243), it is equally inapplicable to a country like Great Britain, in which the "constitution" is largely unwritten, and where, we might add, when it is written, it depends on acts of Parliament (e.g. the Quinquennial Act, which prescribes an election at least every five years). Indeed, in countries without a written constitution the issues are somewhat clearer, for written constitutions tend to be cluttered up with prescriptions on matters of policy, as well as stating the fundamental understandings against the background of which matters of policy are to be considered. An extreme case, quoted by Lindsay, is the provision of the constitution of the State of Oklahoma that Y.M.C.A. secretaries shall travel free on the railways; but it could be, and in fact it was, argued that the eighteenth amendment, which enforced prohibition, was contrary at least to the spirit of the constitution, because prohibition was not properly a constitutional issue. Be that as it may, it is certainly not all the provisions which are



embodied in constitutions of which Lindsay is thinking when he speaks of the "constitution" as the central feature of a democratic society. He is thinking primarily of the conventions which, both in federal and in unitary democratic societies, regulate the proceedings both of government and of governed: majority rule, the electoral system, the rights of oppositions, the institution of the Speaker, and all the other rules of procedure within which even the most determined pressure group is expected to operate. It is in that sense of the word—a sense which comes more naturally to a writer from a country in which constitutions are not written—that Lindsay concludes: "The main fact about all modern constitutional governments is not that the bulk of the society obey certain persons, but that they accept the constitution, and that they obey the commands of the government, i.e., of certain determinate persons, because they have got into authority through the working of the constitution and in so far as their commands are within the limits of the constitution." (*Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1923-4, p. 243.) So understood, the doctrine concerns only the *very* fundamental understandings, and is not subject to the objection, frequently urged against "constitutionalism" in the United States, that it enshrines, together with the necessary conditions of living together in a free society, certain determinations of policy which had better been left to the more easily reversible decisions of governments.<sup>2</sup>

The theory so stated does not deny that positive law issues from a single determinate source: a conclusion which should be welcome to the lawyers, whose attachment to the

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<sup>2</sup> A possible solution of the problem at issue, viz., how to get a common will out of a number of different wills, is to make like-mindedness a condition of membership, in the hope that the problem will not seriously arise. As a matter of fact, even so it will arise on minor issues; but there is a difficulty of principle in even attempting it. The constitution would be used not to balance the conflicting elements in a society, but to silence and suppress one in the interests of another; it would embody, not distributive justice, but the power of some over others. Such a constitution would be undemocratic precisely in virtue of its ethical bias. It is as important to keep material issues out of constitutions as it is to preserve their formal integrity; and the two things go together.

theory of sovereignty is largely on that account; but it makes three important reservations. (1) It insists that the authority of governments is grounded on adherence to the "constitution", just as, in the Middle Ages, it was held to be grounded on "natural law". (2) It draws a distinction between "commanding" and "declaring" law, and allows (e.g. in the case of a High Court interpretation) that the function of authority is not to lay down a law, but to say what it is. (3) It recognizes that there is a body of custom and opinion which is alive, not altogether uninformed, and prepared, under pressure, to break out into open demonstration; and it considers the legislative process to be one not so much of command as of definition and consolidation; form, precision and detailed application being given to what was previously a diffused and dissolved general sentiment.<sup>3</sup>

The first of these reservations we have already discussed; as for the second and third, they do not strictly concern our study of the "constitution"; they do, however, concern the rival theory that law is merely command, and, by weakening it, help to suggest an alternative explanation. Moreover, they raise a point which later in the argument will bear directly on the issue: the relation of the "fundamental understandings" of a society to its general sentiment. Here it may just be observed that the reservations are entirely proper in a description of a working democracy, in which the commands of the government are limited not only by constitutional understandings but also by its sense of what the electorate is likely to insist upon or will not stand; and that the strength of constitutional understandings lies very largely in a diffused popular sentiment in their favour.

With these reservations the theory holds firmly to that part of the theory of sovereignty which needs preserving: the reference to "determinate persons". One of the difficulties about the "sovereignty of the people" is that it provokes the

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. the late J. L. Stocks' admirable article on *Materialism in Politics*, in *Reason and Intuition*, pp. 78-97, in which he states this view in terms of the Aristotelian distinction between Form and Matter.



question "Which people?" As soon as "the people" is made the ultimate source of reference, everybody from Hitler upwards jostles to speak in its name. To adapt one of Lindsay's stories, when a statesman observes, "*Salus populi suprema lex*", one is left wondering what on earth he will do next. It is in fact only by constitutional definition that "the people" can be accurately designated. The precision of authority which the theory of sovereignty requires, even in its popular form, is in fact attainable only by a specification which does not come from the people who are said to be sovereign.

If this is so where "the people" is concerned, it is far more so when writers speak of the "sovereignty of the general will". "The general will", because of the difficulty of locating it, is no use to working lawyers; and it has in fact been found to be embodied in the most diverse societies, from a loose federation of city-state assemblies to the concentrated and rigorous Prussian monarchy of 1820. If, as Rousseau at times suggested, it is necessary to devise machinery for eliciting the general will, it follows that there can be no general will unless that machinery is first accepted, and then, once again, what Lindsay calls "the constitution" is anterior to the body described as sovereign. If, as he at other times suggested, the general will does not depend on being expressed in a prescribed form, it loses its definiteness, is useless to lawyers, and becomes objectionably convenient for ambitious leaders who wish to impersonate the national spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The theory which we have been expounding is presented to us as a statement of the "operative ideal" of the democratic state. It is intended to give a better account of what actually happens in democracies than the alternative theories. There is a tendency for new facts to be explained in terms of older theories; for example, the post-Reformation state was

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<sup>4</sup> These latter points it would take too long to follow up. We have just to say dogmatically that the doctrine of "the general will" either requires antecedent constitutional machinery or is, at the best, ambivalently related to democracy.

explained by Hobbes in terms of contract, a conception essentially feudal.<sup>5</sup> In the same way, the theory of sovereignty is applied to the modern democratic state, though its real application was to the monarchies of the seventeenth century. What Lindsay claims to be doing is to fabricate a new wine-skin to put the new wine in. He is offering (in Collingwood's language) an account of the *presuppositions* of the democratic state; or, in logical positivist language, providing an *analysis* of the word democracy; or, in the language of political science, providing a *description* of democracy in which its various features are exhibited in their proper working order. But this is clearly not all that he is doing. He is saying that the thing so elicited or analysed or described is a good thing. This facet of his thinking comes out when he explains that in this kind of society differences are not eliminated but settled in accordance with a recognized principle; that, he feels, is as it should be; the statement of presuppositions, or the analytic description, is also the presentation of a model.

Here, as so often, political analysis confronts us with ethical issues which it cannot solve. Why should the kind of state which is united through its fundamental understandings be *better* than the kind of state which is united simply by sovereignty? Various answers could be given: (1) it substitutes for sheer will a device for balancing wills against each other; (2) it thus makes room for differences of approach and attitude within the community: no one type is standardized, and the only thing it is necessary to agree about is how differences are to be settled; (3) this is a good thing, because intellect develops through diversity and contradiction, and initiative and experiment are things good in themselves; (4) it makes a necessary distinction between the sphere of morals and the sphere of politics, circumvents the need for the "ethical state", leaves moral reform in the hands of moral reformers, and concentrates simply on the problem of getting different kinds of people to work together on terms

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<sup>5</sup> This is Lindsay's illustration; but contract was also a conception familiar to a growing mercantile society.



which they are willing to accept. All these points will, in fact, engage us in the discussion to follow. Here it is merely insisted that we should mistake both Lindsay's view of the issue, and the issue itself, if we were to treat his analysis *merely* as an analysis. He is asserting, and we should wish to assert with him, not merely that constitutional understandings are in fact the central feature of the democratic state, but that the state so based is a better state than all its rivals.

This free exposition of Lindsay's main contentions is now concluded. Many subtleties, and concessions, and developments have been overlooked, because the main object of this paper is not to attempt an estimate of Lindsay's work as a whole, but to focus attention on a problem which arises when one has in the main accepted it. It is, however, only fitting to conclude in Lindsay's own words. "The modern constitutional state has abandoned the view that law rests on absolute obedience to persons. It has come back in a sense to the mediaeval view that the acceptance of law is the basis of the state; but with this important difference. Its fundamental law is not a code or law of nature but a constitution or machinery, an agreed way of settling differences and getting relevant decisions made, a method not a code, a method indeed which includes means of its own amendment."<sup>6</sup>

We now have to consider a question which Lindsay has left to other inquirers: how far the understandings at the base of the democratic state are to be regarded merely as conventions, and how far, in their order and balance, they rest on what St. Thomas would have called *commensuratio*, or what Aristotle would have called the principles of distributive justice. We shall proceed by taking the purely conventional interpretation and pressing it to the dialectical limit. In the course of the argument we shall see where the element of distributive justice makes its entry; and then we shall inquire how the two elements can be reconciled.

<sup>6</sup> *The Modern Democratic State*, p. 226.

In one of his other works (*Christianity and Economics*, p. 20) Lindsay tells us that what separates the political thought of the Middle Ages from our own is a single letter—ours is concerned not with right, but with rights. He approves this change, as bringing out the latent differences between political and moral action, and the underlying suggestion is that the proper concern of politics is not with morals, but with the terms of co-operation. What we need is a *convention* which everyone will accept and obey, not because it is moral, but just *because it is a convention*. But for such a convention, the competing moralities and ideologies which grow up under its protection would break the whole social structure. By all means let them flourish and denounce one another; that is part of the game; and it is the test of the civilization of a community that it can take the strain and maintain amidst their clamour (their entirely appropriate clamour) a working system of adjustment. But what makes this possible is a convention, something on which everyone can agree despite differences on everything else; and not a so-called immutable morality which has some adherents and some enemies. It is precisely because the system of adjustment has contracted out of the moral turmoil that it has some hope of containing it. And so we should come to side with the Sophists (though on more sophisticated and probably more elevated grounds), and assert that the first principles of a society are by convention and not by nature.

There are two observations to be made here by way of explanation and comparison. (1) The central conventions are *politically* paramount, but it does not follow that they are what matter most morally to any of the citizens. It would be fatal for them if they were. They are rather the limits which the citizen keeps in the back of his mind while otherwise pushing his special convictions with all his energies. No apologies will here be made for citing the well-worn analogy of a game of football; for it is singularly illuminating. Each side plays for a win as hard as it can; *but it obeys the rules*, and if it does not the umpire intervenes. The constitu-



tional understandings of a democracy operate similarly in the case of political parties. But the umpire is not a principal player, nor are constitutional understandings primarily objects of moral enthusiasm. They are part of a second order morality, devoted to keeping the peace between free people and keeping them free. It is not because they are great things that they are valuable; they are among small things which hold greater things in the balance. In this sense they are rather like manners: the pacifying small change of those who are unduly quarrelsome over guineas. And it is just in this sense that manners are said to be the better part of morals.

(2) The appeal to an ultimate convention forcibly reminds us of the theory of social contract; and it may illuminate both that theory and Lindsay's if we pause to compare them. The theory of social contract is mainly concerned to assert that the whole fabric of society rests on mutual agreement at one central point. The obligation to obey when one does not consent rests on one's having consented to do so. The point is admirably expressed by Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, I, 5: "S'il n'y avait point de convention antérieure, où serait, à moins que l'élection ne fût unanime, l'obligation pour le petit nombre de se soumettre au choix du grand? . . . La loi de la pluralité des suffrages est elle-même un établissement de convention, et suppose, au moins une fois, l'unanimité." Owing to the historical form in which the doctrine is presented, the agreement underlying the forms of majority government is depicted as the result of a vote at an original constituent assembly; but in all other respects this "anterior convention" is remarkably like Lindsay's "constitution", or, as we have preferred to state it, "fundamental understandings". The two theories both insist that society rests on a convention; that it can only be kept together by constant reference to that convention; and, in particular, that such a convention has to be postulated as a pre-supposition of majority government. Even the reference to a historical origin is not without historical support: e.g. the nomothesia of a Greek colony, and the "conventions" in U.S.A. and Australia which met to draft

federal constitutions. But, ignoring for the moment the problem of its origins, the constitutional understanding appears in both cases as the focal point of the social order; its observance is presented as the outstanding social virtue;<sup>7</sup> and government is bounded by the original terms which the contract (or the constitution) imposes. The great difference is that the contract theory, in Rousseau as well as in Hobbes,<sup>8</sup> appeals to the conception of sovereignty; but, as has already been observed, even Hobbes, in the case of a so-called sovereign assembly, can discover the will of the sovereign only by recourse to anterior conventions. On the whole, then, Lindsay has presented us with something like a<sup>\*</sup> social contract theory in modern dress; and despite his own flickering and unnecessary sympathy with the notion of the "general will" he takes his stand with the eighteenth century for mutual trust on agreed terms as against crass solidarity on no terms at all.

Having developed the purely conventional interpretation of Lindsay's fundamental understandings, we may now proceed to examine it. Let us first remind ourselves what those understandings are. One that constantly figures in his

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<sup>7</sup> In both Locke and Rousseau, as well as in Lindsay, it takes the form of an ultimate fidelity to one's opponents.

<sup>8</sup> Lindsay's attack on the theory of sovereignty is primarily directed to Austin, against whom it holds without qualification. To the doctrine as held by Hobbes and Rousseau it is more ambivalently related. Both Hobbes and Rousseau base their theory of sovereignty on contract, that is to say, on a prior agreement or convention; and by the terms of that convention even Hobbes's sovereign is bound at least to this extent, that if he cannot supply what Hobbes's men most require, namely, protection, their duty to obey him is dissolved. Sovereignty for Hobbes is therefore not *quite* absolute; and such reference as he makes to the limiting factors is not to the law of nature, but, in the spirit of Lindsay and of this article, to a prior understanding. Certainly within those limits Hobbes's sovereign has absolute discretion; but where there are any limits at all, the problem changes. It is not sovereign v. constitution, but how much sovereignty and how much constitution. As for Rousseau, he also limits sovereignty; his original contract includes specific and binding stipulations as to who should be sovereign. If, then, Lindsay were discussing Hobbes and Rousseau, his discussion would need qualifying. As he is discussing Austin, who relies solely on "the fact of obedience", it can stand. I owe this point to a valuable later discussion with Dr. W. D. Falk, who, if speaking in his own person, might deprecate the general attack on the theory of sovereignty even more strongly.



discussions is majority government; another is official oppositions; a third, closely associated with these, is electoral and parliamentary machinery, and particularly, one might add, the institution of the Speaker. In the same class might be placed (though Lindsay does not refer to it) the non-partisan position of the King—a constitutional understanding so graphically vindicated by recent events in Belgium. A feature of all these cases is that they constitute a background of unity permitting and encouraging a foreground of diversity; that is why they should not be publicly committed to any one of the competing diversities. They have, in fact, in relation to these diversities, to embody the principles of distributive justice. Is that compatible with their being *merely* conventional?

To begin with, they certainly *are* conventions, and it is *as* conventions that they should be observed. But would *any* conventions do? Even in matters of technical efficiency some conventions serve their purpose *better* than others; and it is always possible to call a convention in question on that account. Thus there has been debate about the merits of the Victorian method of taking right-hand turns by pulling in to the kerb and describing a full arc, and of the more usual method of edging outwards from the middle of one road into the middle of the other. Not merely must every motorist obey whichever convention happens to hold, but there are reasons for supposing the usual method to be more efficient if what one wants is the brisker circulation of traffic. So it is in the case of the fundamental understandings which Lindsay calls “constitutional”. Not only has it to be insisted that everyone obey them, but also that they do not deviate from that impartial consideration of claims and opinions which, however faulty it may be in detail, still distinguishes democratic from other forms of society. The bedrock of the whole democratic polity is that these claims should be respected and adjusted, not standardized by an ethical steam-roller. It is for this reason that certain electoral devices are often and (in my opinion) fairly criticized: e.g. the weighting of country

votes, property qualifications for the franchise, the requirement of two-thirds majorities. The umpire has begun to take sides. *That* kind of convention is not good enough. But if *any* convention would do, such moral criticism would be out of place. In recognizing its relevance, we assume that some conventions are *better* than others, either in their consequences or in themselves.

We see this clearly when the conventions are embodied in a person. When the Speaker of a Parliament descends to the floor of the House to make a party oration, as happened in the House of Representatives in 1948; when a King flagrantly favours one section of his people against another, like Leopold III in Belgium; we feel that the convention has lost its moral justification; not because Mr. Rosevear and Leopold III are not good and sincere men, but precisely because their sincerity in their own causes blinds them to their conventional obligations. They are partisans for their own ways of life; and though this is nothing against them personally, or even as citizens (democracy has room for partisans within the constitution) it does disqualify them as constitutional symbols. The objection to them is that just because of their moral sincerity they are politically irresponsible; they tilt the constitution they are expected to balance, and so behave unjustly. And the verdict we pass on them is a moral verdict; they have done that which they ought not to have done.

The principal convention, however, in Lindsay's theory of the constitution is that of majority government. The majority counts for the whole in virtue of a generally agreed convention; the convention is therefore anterior to there being a government at all. But this convention is matched with another convention; that the minority, in accepting the majority as the whole for the time being, may continue to criticize it and can hope to become the majority in its turn. There is not a single convention, but two correlative conventions, one of which balances the other. The case is succinctly stated in the well-known formula, "I will obey punctually and censure freely". The citizen of a democracy *has the right to*



censure freely, *if* he obeys punctually, and *if* he censures freely, he *has the duty* to obey punctually. What is here conventionally proclaimed is the right and the left of an even-handed justice. At the heart of the convention there is a moral principle.

It would be unfair to suggest that Lindsay did not observe this consequence of his own discovery; a sense of the moral importance of the central democratic conventions runs through his whole series of writings; but his use of the term "machinery" to describe them suggests that they are mere devices. The reason why Lindsay did not more squarely recognize what his theory entails is, at a guess, fear of being committed to the doctrine of natural law. He is, in fact, still entangled in the aftermath of the theory of sovereignty, as is shown by the phrase (*Modern Democratic State*, p. 224) "the constitution is sovereign" (cf. *Proc. Ar. Soc.*, 1923-4, p. 254). Locke was wiser when he avoided sovereignty language altogether. The doctrine of sovereignty, from start to finish, was an attack on "natural law", for which it substituted an arbitrary human will. To say that "the constitution is sovereign" is to suggest that "the constitution" is simply an expression of will—not, certainly, of a single will, but of an aggregate of wills demanding a balance rather than universal conformity, and that is a great improvement; but in fact what these wills will is willed as an ethical structure, founded on the principle of commensuration. Lindsay is right when he talks of a return to the mediaeval conception of law as the basis of the state, and he is further right when he says that "the law on which it rests is not now to be regarded as a code of commands or prohibitions" (*Proc. Ar. Soc.*, p. 244). But when he continues, "it is a method according to which commands and prohibitions are produced", he is reducing morals to machinery; and when he paraphrases it in the same sentence as "principles governing men's relations to one another", he is failing to discern the difference. The law of the constitution to which he refers has a basis of natural justice, which does not change with times and seasons,

and to forsake which is unequivocally evil; as Lindsay admits whenever (and it is quite often) he allows his analysis to be tinged with admiration.

None the less, there is a difference between the operation of the "constitution" and the operation of "natural law"; and it is this which Lindsay is trying to bring out. As he writes elsewhere (*Christianity and Economics*, p. 13) of the Reformation, "Politics cut loose from morality, only to be brought back to it in another less rigid relation". It is precisely this relation which we are trying to identify. What it amounts to is this: that the constitutional conventions do not enforce one claim or opinion, but provide the basis for co-operation among men with various claims or opinions. The initiative in matters of morality, on this view, rests with private organizations—churches, families, ethical societies, and not least with professional organizations, which out of current decisions and practices are continually evolving new working standards of their own. The function of the constitution is to ensure that among the various component tendencies of a community there shall be one agreed way of settling differences. Against this constant background, governments will sway this way and that, but will still adhere to the rules which leave to their opponents the right and the duty to reply. The traditional view is that the ruler should apply the law of nature to particular local conditions. Our view is that it is the business of individual moral agents to do the interpreting, and that the various interpretations should be sorted out through discussion under the protection of constitutional understandings. In the former case the excellence of the ruler, apart from mere technique, lies in his own discernment of the moral law. In the latter case there must be added his respect for the rules for making adjustments between other people's interpretations of the moral law. His duty in this respect is a moral duty; but it is not a duty to enforce morality. He submits, as a ruler, not to the law of nature in general, but to the requirements of a special sort of dis-



tributive justice, which, while maintaining the special rights of majorities, equally maintains the basic rights of all.<sup>9</sup>

It is now clear that what gives to the conventions of the constitution their moral sanction is the element of equity or commensuration whereby majority government and the existence of oppositions are mutually guaranteed. When, morally disapproving of the actions of governments, we support the convention by obeying them, we are paying tribute to this concealed moral factor. We are expressing our moral approval, not of what is commanded, but of the system of equity which the constitution maintains among the various claims and attitudes current in the community. The moral sanction of the constitution is a second-order sanction, which is jeopardized as soon as it takes sides on a first-order moral issue. Moreover, its moral character depends on its being agreed upon; the convention, which is more than a convention, *ought* to be respected *because* it is a convention. On the one hand, what matters first of all is that everyone should accept it. On the other, the moment a convention has been established (even if it have no moral bearing in itself, e.g. the rule of the road), there is a moral duty to observe it; to fail in observance is to default, on a mutual expectation.

It may be demanded<sup>10</sup> whether, on this basis, civic obedience in a democracy is unconditional. It is certainly mandatory in a democratic society as it is not in an undemo-

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<sup>9</sup> When Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.*, V. 6) writes of "distributive justice", he notes that it would be unjust to treat unequals equally. The role assigned by the constitution to majorities and minorities respectively is certainly not equal. It assigns power, on terms, to the one, and the right of criticism, also on terms, to the other. The ground of the discrimination is not moral; yet it is a moral discrimination. The ground of the discrimination is that it promotes co-operation among people who differ. There is a presumption that people will work best together on a programme that most people want. This programme, therefore, has priority of experiment. Views change, however, and experiments initiated by a given group are sure to be out of perspective somewhere; so those who advocate a different experiment are held in reserve for the suitable occasion. Thus the difference between the rights of majorities and those of minorities is softened by the possibility of reversal; behind the proportional justice lies an equal justice.

<sup>10</sup> As it was by Mr. S. S. Orr at the reading of this paper to the conference of the A.A.P.P., August 18th, 1950.

cratic society, for there is always the opportunity to voice one's protest and to persuade people to adopt one's opinions. The cases which are usually cited as justifying disobedience to the constitution are cases in which the machinery of the constitution is being used to destroy the constitution (e.g. Hitler's quite constitutional accession to power in 1933); and here no doubt arises—it is only by disobedience, if at all, that the constitution can be saved. The same would be true if a constitutionally elected majority set out to suppress a form of religion; for this would be opposed to the safeguard provided by the constitution for the expression of minority opinion. But there might be cases in which disobedience could be justified, even though the government thus set at defiance were constitutionally elected and intended no constitutional violence. It would have to be a major issue on which an individual conscience could presume to disturb the whole fabric of promises incorporated in a society, but there are such issues, and no one can say *a priori* which way an individual agent should decide. It is clear, however, that the rebel in a constitutional state has no claim on its advantages. A two-sided convention requires the observance of both its terms.

It has been objected<sup>11</sup> that both Lindsay's theory of the constitution, and the variations played on it in this re-assessment, are over-simplifications of a complex social position, and that the devices adopted to secure impartiality between *some* tendencies or movements are inevitably partial in respect of others. The observation is true: whether it is an objection is another matter. In defence it may be argued: (i) that the gap can be narrowed by the growth of human wisdom, (ii) that the residual minimum of inconvenience is inevitable when some problems and interests are more to the fore than others, and that one of the achievements of civilization is to have reduced to a mere inconvenience what in an unconstitutional state would have been (and is) intolerable oppression, and

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<sup>11</sup> By Mr. J. L. Mackie, in the discussion following this paper, at the Melbourne conference of the A.A.P.P., August 18th, 1950.

(iii) that, as a matter of sheer fact, it is the most urgent and dividing problems which occupy the foreground in a democracy, and a system of adjustment which is even moderately impartial where these are concerned is not likely to be seriously defective elsewhere. For the rest, it certainly has to be remembered that there may be "tragic situations" incapable of adjustment;<sup>12</sup> but the good democrat may still work at them against the odds, and, failing, may still leave the atmosphere more reasonable than it would have been without him.

There is one final observation required to complete the picture. The fundamental understandings at the base of a society can only work if a sufficient number of people have the constitutional spirit in their souls. For example, it makes all the difference, even in party politicians, whether they think party is everything or whether they recognize a limit; and it is one of the pleasant things to remember as the threat of violence looms again on the horizon, that despite their abuse of one another they have usually recognized the limit fairly enough; they have respected it at least sufficiently to edge round it and not to charge through it. Further, there is a habit of professional disinterestedness among civil servants and academic leaders, who in a different kind of community would be chosen for their doctrinal intolerance.<sup>13</sup> On the survival of these habits, and above all on the continuance of the plain man's demand for a "fair deal", on his adherence to the small but precious common decencies which doctrinaires in their zeal for causes so contemptuously override,<sup>14</sup> the whole political superstructure depends. People

<sup>12</sup> As remarked by my colleague, Dr. W. D. Falk.

<sup>13</sup> As was pointed out by Mr. D. M. Armstrong in the discussion following this paper, the virtues required of administrators exhibiting their second-order morality are also required as primary ingredients of first-order morality. Impartiality of temper, attention to evidence, freedom from fanaticism and *parti pris* are particularly academic virtues. That is why academic enterprise is so intimately linked to the constitutional state.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the Nazi writer on education, Alfred Bäumler, *Politik und Erziehung*, p. 14: Die unpolitische formale Pflichterfüllung ist die grösste Gefahr des deutschen Bürgertums.



will have constitutional government only if they want it; and in that sense it is true, as the doctrine of popular sovereignty asserts, that the people make the constitution. They make it, however, not by altering its provisions to suit themselves, but by framing their own way of life constitutionally. Even when they change it, as they do, they change it in detail, and in conformity with the spirit that underlies it. In modern times we do not think it necessary (as could happen under the *γραφὴ παρανόμων* in Ancient Athens) to put the author of an unconstitutional proposal to death; nor do we expect the details of the constitution to endure from everlasting to everlasting. But everything that kindness, flattery and ridicule can do to wheedle the cause-mongers into compliance with the rules of the game, we, as philosophers, owe here and now to ourselves and our descendants. On an apparently technical issue of political science hangs the future of the human intellect. If this analysis helps in any way to unravel the issues, and if, in particular, it helps to provide a moral basis for the conventions by which we live and are determined to go on living, it will perhaps have been worth performing. As our logical analysts keep informing us, much can be done simply by clarification.

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## PSYCHOLOGY AND POETRY

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By A. R. CRANE

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WHAT has the psychologist to offer in an attempt to understand the elusive mysteries of poetry? Poetry, one of the highest products of the human mind, has been rather neglected by psychologists: the only ones who have anything systematic to say about it are the psycho-analysts, and they are primarily concerned with the mechanisms within the poet which motivate him to produce poetry. They have less to say about the equally interesting phenomenon of the enjoyment of poetry. This paper is an attempt to develop a theory of poetry from the point of view of the consumer—the reader and the listener.

### 1. THE NATURE OF THOUGHT.

To think means to recall relevant past experience in order to meet a new situation. Thought may be of two kinds: in the first place, we may meet the new situation by reasoning out a way to deal with it. For example, we have pressed the switch of the electric light, but no light glows. Here is a new situation which we meet on the basis of our past experience (either practical or through reading or other instruction) by investigating one possible cause after another. Because of our knowledge of our lack of experience we might call in an electrician. This sort of thinking is known as reasoning.

There is, however, a second type of thinking—autistic thinking. When a problem presented to us is difficult or impossible for us to solve and yet we are persistently pressed towards a solution, then we might find our solution on the level of phantasy, reverie or dream. This gives an “irreal” rather than an unreal solution, since it is satisfying to us

emotionally to the extent that tensions are reduced for the time being. We do not lose grip on reality altogether unless, of course, we retire into insanity. If we lack money we daydream of fur coats and limousines, we enjoy books and films on the "success" theme, but we don't lose grip of the fact that we still have none of these things. For the time being, however, whilst we daydream, or read or sit in the theatre we have an emotionally satisfying experience. Tensions pressing us towards a solution of our problem have been reduced. Autistic thinking does not establish truths, but it gives some satisfaction to desires and releases tensions.

The nature of our autistic images at any time will therefore depend largely upon the problems we are facing at that time. The erotic imagery of the adolescent, the freedom phantasies of the prisoner and the food dreams of the hungry explorer are obvious examples.

In any society there are problems common to all its members because of the conventional taboos and restrictions on behaviour and also because of the difficulties the environment may place in the way of all individuals being fed, housed and clothed according to the "acceptable" standards set by the society.

In a modern industrial society, for example, the problems which face all its members are the restrictions on sex expression and outlet and the restrictions inherent in the fact that the goals considered most desirable are attainable only with economic success. A capitalist industrial society sets up this goal of economic success and also puts many barriers in the way of our achieving it. This situation is a fertile source of autistic imagery.

The individual need not be conscious of these problems, but they make their presence felt through vague feelings of dissatisfaction, uneasiness and frustration.

Since many basic problems are common to everyone throughout a society, we may expect some common features to run through the autistic images of all members of that



society. Here we are reminded of the Collective Unconscious of Jung and also of the universal symbolism which plays such an important part in the psychology of Freud and his followers. Because of this common source, the images of one person will to a certain extent be communicable to others who have much the same system of restraining forces operating upon them. There will seldom be complete congruence; there will always be a penumbra around any image which is entirely individual, so that within limits the images mean different things to different people.

We have seen that in autistic thought a succession of images replaces the logical sequence of reasoning. The image succession or flow of imagery is determined largely by emotion just as the reasoned succession is determined by logic. In these images we often have crystallised whole attitude systems. Here the word "attitude" is used to mean an individual's characteristic ways of thinking. When an image carries this extra weight it becomes a "symbol". Since our attitudes towards many different things may have much in common, the same symbol may be used for many different emotionally toned idea systems. This in turn leads to the "overdetermination" of symbols pointed out by Freud.

By overdetermination is meant that the symbol may have many meanings, but through all these there runs a common element of emotional tone in that we "feel-the-same-way-about" all the different things the symbol stands for. This indefiniteness of the precise "real" meaning of image or symbol deepens the individual penumbra spoken of earlier.

We can pierce this penumbra in many ways and the exact nature of what we find will depend on how deeply we pierce and from what angle we approach it. There will be a common centre, but round this play, phantom fashion, suggestions of other interpretations. It is largely the same problem as the six wise but blind men of Hindustan faced when they went to see an elephant. One touched the body and declared the elephant to be "very like a wall", the second felt the tusk

and announced the elephant was "like a spear", yet another found the trunk and likened it to a snake, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

Let us take a poetic example from the refrain in T. S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men":

"Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning."

Here there is an echo of the childhood mulberry bush game; an echo of the marching round the golden calf of Baal; golden calf—symbol of fertility; prickly pear—symbol of sterility, desolation. So we get a picture of crowds of people occupied in childish, aimless, sterile activity. Others might "see" something different, but the central theme of aimless occupation will stay constant.

This lack of one to one correspondence between autistic images or symbols on the one hand and "reality" on the other means that both images and symbols are rich in meaning. We never quite get to the end of all the possible shades of thought which they can convey.

## 2. VERBALISED AND UNVERBALISED THOUGHT.

Thought may or may not be capable of being put into words. It is important here to remember that there is a distinction between personal understanding and verbal explanation. Many students find this out when they come to write answers to examination questions which they were sure they "knew" but find they cannot put on paper. Most people will demonstrate the essential difference between the two when they are asked what a spiral staircase is.

When thought is unverballed, Piaget, the Swiss child psychologist, has suggested the descriptive term "syncretistic".

Syncretistic thought is non-logical and non-explicit. There is a tendency to leap from premise to conclusion in a single bound, in the process commonly known as "intuition". Little

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<sup>1</sup> J. G. Saxe: "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

importance or value is attached to proving the conclusion which has been reached in this way with a feeling of certainty. The situation has been perceived as a whole: this gives a greater feeling of security than if each step in the argument were explained. This phenomenon of intuition has much in common with the vision of the "altogetherness-of-everything" sought by eastern mystics.

In this jump or flash of intuition personal "schemas" play an important rôle. The term "schema" means a system of images organised uniquely in each individual. In these schemas causal and logical relations are unexpressed and often unrecognised.

One interesting example of these schemas is the ability of the "lightning calculator" prodigy who can give immediately correct answers to problems involving the multiplication, division, powers and roots of numbers of any magnitude. Very seldom can they explain how they do it; they just "get the answer" through some unverbaised schema they happen to possess; no one knows how or whence it came.

In these schematic organisations of images possessed by us all, images which "go together" are juxtaposed—put together—but the reason for their going together is unverbaised. The basis of the relationships in the schemas is frequently not logical or rational but dynamic or emotional. Rupert Brooke's "Great Lover" is a good example of this juxtaposition of images connected only by an emotion of the poet:

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;  
Wet roofs, beneath the lamplight; the strong crust  
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting foods . . . .

There is nothing difficult about this because the connection, as well as being emotional, has been verbalised. Brooke tells us that he puts them together because he loves them all. Often, however, the emotional thread on which the



poem is strung is invisible—felt rather than seen—as, for example, in Kenneth Slessor's "Fixed Ideas":

Ranks of electroplated cubes, dwindling to glitters,  
Like the other pasture, the trigonometry of marble,  
Death's candy-bed. Stone caked on stone,  
Dry pyramids and racks of iron balls . . . .

This same miscellany is also a feature of some modern art where all sorts of things are thrown together on the canvas because all have much the same emotional significance for the artist.

"To my misfortune and probably to my delight" (said Pablo Picasso) I use things as my passions tell me to. What a miserable fate for a painter who adores blondes to have to stop putting them into the picture because they do not go with a basket of fruit."<sup>2</sup>

To understand why "this" goes with "that" we must first discover the schema through which the items are connected; then all individual items take their place in relation to this central core. The words of the poem melt into the context. Much of the work of Dylan Thomas is an example of this:

*After the Funeral*

(In Memory of Ann Jones).

After the funeral, mule praises, brays,  
Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toes tap  
Tap happily of one peg in the thick  
Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,  
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves.

The interpretation of the what-goes-with-what may be made differently by different people, or even by the same person at different times. We might "feel" the connections in different ways but the interpretation will always be within the same general emotional framework. This is one reason why great poetry is always fresh. We are continually seeing new depths and nuances of meaning. Great poetry is richly

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Ruth Dunnet: *Art and Child Personality*. 1948, p. 14.

evocative once it gains contact—once the poet has successfully gained communication with the reader.

### 3. THE NATURE OF UNDERSTANDING.

Understanding occurs only so far as there is contact between the known and the "to-be-known". It can be of two different types. It may be logical in nature; here to understand means that the event or fact has been integrated into an already existing body of logically coherent knowledge. The "to-be-known" has been "thought in"—it has been understood.

In the second place understanding might be essentially emotional. Here to understand means that A is sensitive to the emotional states of B. It is the understanding we find between husband and wife, mother and child, friend and friend. Our civilisation has concentrated on the logical to the almost complete exclusion of the emotional type of understanding.

When we consider poetry the difference between the two types of understanding becomes important. If we parse every word and analyse every sentence, trace down every allusion, investigate every metaphor in a poem, it might give us understanding of the first order but at the same time we can miss everything of the second. The logical understanding of a poem is the sort of appreciation far too often taught in schools. A very good example of this "logical" approach to poetry is found in Campbell's "Higher English".

### 4. THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE.

Understanding of either type cannot occur without communication. This raises the question of language, which is the usual method of communication between human beings. Language may be used in two ways that correspond to the two types of thought and of understanding: to communicate logical thought (e.g. "let ABC be a triangle") and to communicate an emotional tone (e.g. "Hurrah!", "Gee", "Ahem"). Most likely the origin of language was in this second use, originating in mating and danger cries. We often still revert

to this primitive use of language when we stub a toe or talk to an infant.

The two uses of language are never entirely separate. Our emotional state communicates through our language unless very strenuous attempts are made to prevent it, as, for example, in diplomatic statements. This emotional charge on language makes it possible for it to be understood in both the meanings of that process. It is when language communicates on both levels at once that it becomes most meaningful and efficient.

It is from a confluence of the emotional tone of the word and the sense of the word that poetry is born. This is something more than the old "sound plus sense" formula which would lead us to proclaim verse of the "I sprang to the stirrup and Joris and he" type to be great poetry. For poetry there must be a use of words which as well as indicating the "thing" compels us to feel what the poet wants us to feel about the "thing". We find this essence of poetry in Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven":

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.

Here we have not only the sense and sound of an inexorable pursuit, but also there is communicated the emotional state of vague fear coupled with awe which the poet compels us to feel as he felt it.

Another example, at random, is Stephen Spender's "Elegy for Margaret":

Poor child, you wear your summer dress  
And your shoes striped with gold  
As the earth wears a variegated cover  
Of grass and flowers  
Covering caverns of destruction over  
When hollow deaths are told.



This contains not only the tolling of the funeral bell, but also an emotion of sorrow rather than grief. There is no sense of personal loss, but an all-pervading sadness. All this is achieved by the use of words which communicate on both levels at once.

A further example, built around an emotion of quite a different sort, is D. H. Lawrence's "How Beastly the Bourgeois is!"

How beastly the bourgeois is  
especially the male of the species—

Isn't he handsome? isn't he wealthy? isn't he a fine  
specimen?

doesn't he look the fresh clean Englishman outside?

Isn't it God's own image? tramping his 30 miles a day  
after partridges, or a little rubber ball?

wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and quite  
the thing?

Lawrence's use of language is so compelling here that it is difficult not to thumb the nose as we read.

## 5. THE NATURE OF RHYTHM

This sympathetic flow of emotion from the poem to the reader is considerably heightened by rhythm or metre. The nature of the psychological effect of rhythm has never been discovered. Perhaps it is a primordial reminder that human beings are part of the whole pattern of nature with its rhythms of seed time and harvest; of ebb and flow; of growth, blossom and decay. Within ourselves there are the vital rhythmic processes of heart beat and vegetative functions, in which emotion probably has its source. It is therefore not difficult to understand why rhythms have an emotional effect upon us. I. A. Richards had the same idea when he wrote: "We shall never understand metre so long as we ask, 'Why does temporal pattern so excite us?' and fail to realise that the pattern itself is a vast cyclic agitation spreading all over

the body, a tide of excitement pouring through the channels of the mind.”<sup>a</sup>

Those who would divide poetic metre into “longs” and “shorts” rather miss the essential point that there are many more nuances and subtleties of rhythm to which we are capable of responding. No two rhythms or metres can ever be the same no matter how identical they look when translated into the misleading longs and shorts.

It must suffice to say here that so far as the reader or listener is concerned rhythm does have an important influence upon what the poem communicates and the effectiveness with which this communication occurs.

#### 6. THE WORD-SENTENCE.

Another feature of language which is of interest to those who would “understand” poetry is the word-sentence which comes before the grammatically complete statement in the development of language in the child. “Doll” may mean “I want my doll” or “Is this a doll?” according to the general context. Red Indians are masters of the word-sentence.

This means that the one word may carry with it a whole wealth of both logical and emotional meaning; e.g. “Rotter!”. G. M. Hopkins uses the word-sentence (or the phrase-sentence) frequently, for example in “Pied Beauty”:

Glory be to God for dappled things—  
 For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow,  
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches’ wings;  
 Landscape plotted and pierced—gold, gallow, and plough;  
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

Every word there is pregnant with meaning.

#### 7. THE NATURE OF THE POET’S GENIUS.

It seems probable that the poet differs from the ordinary run of humanity in that not only is he more sensitive to the

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<sup>a</sup> Richards, I. A.: *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1934, p. 140.

emotional tones of events and to the basic frustrations of living in their society, but also can verbalise what he feels. He possesses a capacity of verbalising the schema of his autistic images and, in so doing, communicating them to the reader.

The question has often been raised whether the poet's use of language should concentrate on conveying logical understanding or on emotional communication. The success of a poet must surely not be judged by the scientific accuracy of what he says, but by the success with which he evokes a series of emotionally toned autistic images. For scientific information we go to textbooks, not to poetry. When Shaw Neilson writes of lambs being "white and lavender" or of "silver-hatted mushrooms" or when T. S. Eliot says that

the evening is spread out against the sky

Like a patient etherised upon a table

they obviously are not to be condemned for inaccuracy.

The poet's genius is the choice of the word with just that exact emotional charge that will allow communication on the two levels spoken of earlier. When Brennan refers to "the cicada's *torture point* of song" it is a demonstration of this.

The emotional response of the reader to language is made possible by a sympathy between the emotions the poet is trying to express and the emotional make-up of the reader. This emotional response will vary from reader to reader since no two persons are alike either in their autistic schemas or in their potentialities for logical comprehension. Therefore at both levels of understanding variations occur from reader to reader. In the first place, the more learned reader will "see more" in the poem than others. He will for example recognise classical allusions, references to and echoes of other works. Eliot and Pound abound in this allusiveness and those who can follow their references have a richer experience on the first plane of understanding.

In the second place, those who are more sensitive to the emotional character of the language will "see more" on the



feeling plane. Here Dylan Thomas's work excels. It is evocative par excellence in that it impels us to the emotional tone the poet wishes to communicate, yet the exact logical meaning behind the feeling is left to us. Take for example "And Death Shall Have No Dominion":

And death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and the clean  
bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise  
again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not;  
And death shall have no dominion.

Here is a paean of metamorphosis—a song of the Phoenix fire, a song of the Risen Christ, a song of hope for all humanity. It is a majestic diapason hardly equalled even by Milton. Yet if we seek the logical meaning of the words we will find some difficulty. Imagine anyone trying to paraphrase this poem.

#### 8. THE ILLUMINATING POWER OF POETRY.

But in great poetry there is much more than communication. There is as well an illumination because the poet has verbalised an autistic schema already existing in the reader, but below the verbal level. In reading great poetry we are like the blind receiving sight: it gives us a consciousness that we have known those things all the time, but have never before really seen them. There is a stabbing awake of the spirit; we receive a more intense awareness. Because poets are able to verbalise the emotional tensions and aspirations of us all, they show us what we cannot see for ourselves. Poetry provides us with "charmed magic casements" through which we may look out upon the world or in upon ourselves with a deeper, richer awareness.

When speaking of some of the characteristics of autistic images, the phenomenon of juxtaposition was mentioned. This is where images are connected not through logic but through emotion. Another phenomenon referred to was that of intuition which sometimes led to a vision of the "altogether-ness-of-everything". Often the poet sees connections where we do not (that surely is the basis of metaphor) but these connections are sometimes difficult or impossible for even the poet to verbalise in such a way that communication on both levels is achieved. Often we can feel with the poet without being able to see what he had seen in his intuitional flash.

This is the case, for example, in "The Orange Tree", one of Shaw Neilson's best poems:

The young girl stood beside me. I  
Saw not what her young eyes could see:  
—A light, she said, not of the sky  
Lives somewhere in the Orange Tree.

Like the "young girl" Neilson had seen a vision through the magic casement of his poet's mind. We might not be able to visualise what he saw, but we still feel the thrill of his discovery and participate in a most moving experience.

The question here arises whether verse can be called poetry if it does not communicate on both levels simultaneously. Opinions differ considerably about this: I should say that if the poet has been able to communicate an emotional tone together with some glimpses of his vision, then he has produced poetry. Where, however, we have to search for a point of logical or emotional contact, then it is no longer poetry, but a puzzle or a guessing game. To me much of the verse of William Empson falls into this category. Take for example:

#### Letter V

Not locus if you will but envelope,  
Paths of light not atoms of good form;  
Such tangents praise, less crashing, not less warm,  
May gain more intimacy for less hope.

Evidently someone had criticised Empson's work for the same reason as given here, since in "Your Teeth are Ivory Towers" he himself writes:

There are some critics say our verse is bad  
Because Piaget's babies had the same affectation,  
Proved by interview. These young were mad,  
They spoke not to Piaget but to themselves.

This is a clear reference to Piaget's work on the egocentric nature of the thought of children—uncommunicable to the point of solipsism.

If, as we have argued, emotionally charged language is the essence of poetry, then before verse takes on the glow of poetry, the language must bear evidence of having been plunged into the fires of emotion until it shines with its own heat. When the fires are fierce the language sometimes melts before it can be used: no known word can convey what the poet is feeling, so a new language is moulded. This new language, however, must have enough similarities with the known language, otherwise communication could not occur—it would be merely meaningless gibberish to the reader.

In the work of James Joyce we have a classical example of this breakdown of the language as a vehicle to convey just what the writer wanted. The following is a very small example from "Finnegans Wake", which, although it does not pretend to be poetry, shows how effectively Joyce can communicate through this "melted" language.

Sobs they sighdid at Fillegain's chrissormiss wake, all the hoolivans of the nation, prostrated in their consternation, and their duodecimally profuse plethora of ululation. There was plumbs and grumes and cheriffs and citheners and raiders and cinemen too. And all gianed in with the shoutmost shoviality.

It would be hard to beat that as a description of a rowdy party.

To change the metaphor from the melting furnace, we may say that the emotional tension on a word may be too strong for the word to hold, so it breaks asunder.



Neilson is near snapping point in "The Orange Tree", where we are conscious that the words he used could express "only the edges" of what he wanted to convey. Perhaps "Broken Lyre Strings" would be a good title for a volume of poetry. Eliot in "Prufrock" sums up the dilemma of the poet in this way:

It is impossible to say just what I mean!

But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in  
patterns on a screen.

Perhaps "Nerve Patterns" might be a better name for that volume.

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## HEINRICH HERTZ AND THE CONCEPT OF FORCE

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By J. J. C. SMART

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HERTZ's "Principles of Mechanics" contains many passages which have frequently been quoted by philosophers, and his approach to the problems of mechanics has long been regarded as showing a highly philosophical mind.<sup>(1)</sup> Now Hertz's system of mechanics is of no practical importance; its interest is purely theoretical, and in this article I do not propose to discuss the importance of Hertz's mechanics regarded as a piece of applied mathematics. What I want to do is to discuss Hertz's motives for producing this new system of mechanics. They were somewhat curious, and of considerable philosophical interest. That this is so has not, I think, been sufficiently recognised.

Hertz was dissatisfied with the normal, Newtonian, presentation of dynamics because he thought that some of its fundamental conceptions were extremely unclear. He expressed this dissatisfaction in the following often quoted passage: "Weighty evidence seems to be furnished by the statements which one hears with wearisome frequency, that the nature of force is a mystery, that one of the chief problems of physics is the investigation of the nature of force, and so on. In the same way electricians are continually attacked as to the nature of electricity. Now why is it that people never in this way ask what is the nature of gold, or what is the nature of velocity? Is the nature of gold better known to us than that of electricity, or the nature of velocity better than that of force? Certainly not. I fancy the difference must lie in this. With the terms 'velocity' and 'gold' we connect a large number of relations to other terms; and between all these relations we find no contradictions which offend us. We

are therefore satisfied and ask no further questions. But we have accumulated around the terms 'force' and 'electricity' more relations than can be completely reconciled amongst themselves. We have an obscure feeling of this and want to have things cleared up. Our confused wish finds expression in the confused question as to the nature of force and electricity. But the answer which we want is not really an answer to this question. It is not by finding out more and fresh relations and connections that it can be answered; but by removing the contradictions existing between those already known, and thus perhaps by reducing their number. When these painful contradictions are removed, the question as to the nature of force will not have been answered; but our minds, no longer vexed, will cease to ask illegitimate questions." <sup>(2)</sup>

What are the difficulties about force? Suppose first of all that we explain the concept of weight, by saying, for example, that two particles joined by a light string which passes over a pulley have the same weight if they balance, that a mass A which balances two masses B and C has a weight equal to the sum of the weights of B and C, that a spring which balances a weight A has a tension equal to the weight of A. Here we have a statical conception of force. We might extend the concept of force by considering unbalanced forces. We should then find that an unbalanced force  $F$  will give a particle of mass  $m$  an acceleration  $f$ , where  $F = mf$ . This is Newton's second law of motion, and looked at in this way the law is evidently an empirical one, an induction from experience of the various accelerations given to bodies by stretched springs and so on. On the other hand, this account is a complete distortion of the concept of force

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\* These are brought out to some extent on the first half of p. 12 of the Introduction. Hertz also refers to objections of a slightly different nature, connected with the question of the *simplicity* of the Newtonian representation. See especially p. 13 of the Introduction. These are not altogether difficulties in respect of the *clarity* of the representation, and I do not discuss them here, but in fairness to Hertz I suggest that the reader should not on this account omit them from his consideration.



as it occurs in dynamics. For there the second law of motion must be understood in conjunction with the first and third laws. Consider the first law. This says that a body which is not acted on by a force moves with uniform velocity in a straight line. If, however, a body, for example a stone of mass  $m$ , is thrown into the air and is observed to move in a curve, we say that it must be acted on by a force, and that if it has an acceleration  $f$  in a certain direction, then there must be a force  $mf$  acting on it in that direction. It now looks, however, as though we have reduced the first and second laws of motion to tautologies. Is " $F = mf$ " as it occurs in Newtonian dynamics a *definition* of force? This would reduce the first and second laws of motion to trivialities. Shall we agree that they are, and that the factual weight of the theory rests on the third law? The theory would then state that if we choose suitable axes of reference we can find "a certain decomposition of the rates of change of momenta, relative to the axes, of all particles of the universe, namely one in which the components occur in pairs, the members of each pair belonging to two different particles and being opposite in direction, in the line joining the particles, and equal in magnitude. Each component in the proposed decomposition is called a force and is said to act on the particle to which it belongs." <sup>(3)</sup> Here the observables are distances and velocities: forces and masses are defined in terms of these. It is a beautiful exposition of the situation as it confronts us in astronomy. But what of the connection between "mass" here and mass as measured in the laboratory, by balance? And do Newton's laws of motion reduce to the assertion that a certain programme *can* be carried out (that axes *can* be chosen so that a certain decomposition *can* be made)? What does "can" mean? It does not mean that the programme *has* everywhere been carried out, but nor is it merely a pious hope. It means that a certain amount of success has been achieved in the past; (of course the success has been, in fact, enormous; consider for example the discovery of Neptune, and the application of Newton's laws to the motion of double stars, and even,

to some extent, to the rotation of the galaxy): it also means that continued success is to be expected in the immediate future. But all this is very vague. Is the concept of force as vague as this?

Let us look at the same thing from a slightly different angle. Suppose we throw a ball into the air. It moves in a curve, though there is no force, in the statical sense of "force", acting on it. We say that there is a gravitational force. Is this statement a triviality? No, for we would only make it if there was (as there is) a reasonably simple law of gravity such as the inverse square law. If "gravitational" attraction were so haphazard that no law of gravitation seemed to exist we should not speak of gravitational force, for the assertion that there was a gravitational force on a body with an otherwise unaccountable acceleration would be trivial. It would not enable us to connect up the acceleration of the body in these circumstances with its acceleration in other circumstances, or to perform any calculations to predict its subsequent motion. The first and second laws of motion would then indeed be trivial tautologies. Again, when an iron ball is allowed to drop past a powerful magnet or an electrified pith ball is allowed to fall past a similar ball, the ball has an acceleration in addition to that predicted by the law of gravity, and so we speak of a magnetic or electrostatic force. This would be trivial if there were no reasonably simple law of magnetic or electrostatic attraction discoverable. In fact, as we all know, there are reasonably simple laws of magnetic and electrostatic attraction. In other words, to save the Newtonian laws by regarding them as defining "force" can indeed be done, but when we do it we always "take the responsibility of opening up a new branch of physics",<sup>(4)</sup> and hence we, so to speak, bet that our predictive methods can be successfully extended. So though we may treat the Newtonian laws as if they were definitions of "force" we are nevertheless making a bet, we are not treating them merely as definitions. All this is what makes the question "are the laws of motion analytic or empirical?" such a misleading question. We feel

like answering that they are both and neither. The criteria for asserting them are in the main well known, but their number is not definite, and sometimes we must (to use the language of military strategists) judge of imponderables. We have rules for the use of the word "force", but not strict rules. Our worry occurs because we want to fit the theoretical laws of dynamics into one or other of the logician's pigeonholes "analytic" and "synthetic", and they aren't made for either. (Nor are they *obviously* made for *neither*.)

Hertz contrasts "force" and "electricity" with "velocity" and "gold". He says we feel confused about the former pair of concepts in a way in which we do not feel confused about the latter pair, but does not put his finger very clearly on why we are confused in the one case and not in the other. One important difference seems to be this: the questions "what is velocity?" and "what is gold?" are in certain circumstances intelligible. Whereas "what is force?" and "what is electricity?" are not normally intelligible. "What is velocity?" may be interpreted as a request for a definition of "velocity", and the concept of velocity is one of the comparatively restricted set of concepts with respect to which it makes sense to ask for a definition. "Velocity" is a shorthand concept, just as "oculist" is. "Oculist" is short for "eye-doctor". Again, "googly" is a shorthand word. It is shorthand for "off-break delivered with a leg-break action". But most words are not shorthand words, and it is obvious that not all words can be. "Velocity" is shorthand for  $\frac{Lt}{dt} \rightarrow \frac{ds}{dt}$  where  $s$  is the distance travelled in time  $t$ . On the other hand "what is gold?" is not interpretable as a request for a definition of "gold", for "gold" is not a shorthand word.<sup>(6)</sup> But in certain circumstances "what is gold?" is intelligible; it may be answered by pointing, "Look, that and that and that are gold". Or, again, we could say "gold is a malleable, yellow, shiny metal", which though not acceptable as a *definition* of "gold", would go some way as part of an *explanation* of the meaning of "gold".



There is an important class of words that are not shorthand words. These are words like "blue", "sweet", "shrill". To explain the use of the word "blue" to a blind man is impossible; he has no use for it. We explain "blue" ostensively—we point to blue things and teach a child to pick blue things from a heap when we say "blue", red things when we say "red", and so on. Let us call such concepts "ostensive concepts". Now many philosophers have called ostensive concepts "indefinable", and have supposed that all concepts are either indefinable or definable. This is to make most of our concepts shorthand ones. This, however, is clearly wrong. For many concepts can be explained linguistically, non-ostensively, but the rules for their use are not strict, and so the linguistic explanation cannot take the form of a definition. We saw that "force" is of this sort. So again is "electricity". So again is "length". We can explain how to measure length, but there is no definition of "length", for length is not a shorthand concept. Nor again is "nation". We can explain what is meant by "nations" by giving sample sentences about people which would be held to verify or confute a given statement about nations, but, as is well known, there are no strict rules of translation. The dichotomy "definable-indefinable" is thus another of logic's bogus dichotomies. Part of the trouble is as follows. The dichotomy "definable-indefinable" works perfectly in mathematics. In pure mathematics some of the concepts are indefinable in the sense that they are "implicitly defined" by the axioms; lines, points, planes, etc. in an axiomatic treatment of geometry, for example, are just regarded as entities which satisfy the axioms, and various "interpretations" are of course possible. All other concepts are shorthand concepts. Thus "circle" is shorthand for "curve every point of which lies at the same distance from a given point". It would not affect the mathematics but only time and ink and temper, if everywhere "circle" were struck out and replaced by the longer phrase. Taking pure mathematics as our model, we easily tend to ask for definitions of the various concepts of empirical science and of ordinary life.

But language outside mathematics has an empirical job to do, and an important feature of language that has an empirical job to do is that it necessarily takes a form in which the dichotomy "definable-indefinable" is ludicrously inappropriate. This is so not least in science. Who ever saw a definition of "electron"? It would be impossible to give the use of the word "electron" by giving a hard and fast rule for its use. But the use of the word "electron" can be given an explanation, though not a strict explanation. How would one explain to a person the use of the word "electron"? One would describe cathode ray tubes, the Wilson cloud chamber, the experiment to determine the ratio of the charge to the mass of the electron, and so on. Later one would explain the rôle "electron" plays in theory, in wave mechanics, say. Gradually the person would become more and more competent in the use of the word "electron". But we would not have given him a definite set of rules. He would have to use his common sense. Thus if wave mechanics were scrapped, or if a particular experiment were discredited, he would not now say that the entities in question were not electrons. Provided a reasonable proportion of the criteria remained he would continue to speak of electrons. There is no short cut to acquiring the competence which is the ability to use the word "electron" intelligently; "electron" is not a shorthand concept. Of course there are shorthand concepts in physics, like "work", which is short for "integral of force with respect to space", but the interesting concepts are not shorthand ones.

Similarly in ethics the interesting concepts are not shorthand ones, but nor are they ostensive ones like "yellow". We can give a linguistic explanation of the use of "good" but not a strict one. There is no *definition* of "good"; there is no definite set of rules for its use. Nevertheless there is an indefinite set of rules for its use. A child can say "what is a bad man?" and as a first approximation his mother can say "a bad man is a man who tells lies, or who is cruel, or who kills people, or who breaks promises, and so on". Again the child can point to a man who is putting his whiskers in his

soup. "Bad man", he will say. "No, not bad", his mother will reply, "a man who steals is bad, but a man who puts his whiskers in the soup is not bad, he is rude". Gradually the child will learn how to apply the words "good", "bad", "polite", "rude" and so on correctly. He will have acquired a linguistic competence. On the other hand, it is not a competence which can be inculcated by inculcating a strict rule. It is more like the competence of a batsman at stroke-playing than the competence of the umpire at counting the number of balls in an over. It is small wonder, then, that the uncritical taking over from mathematics, where it works, to ordinary, scientific, or ethical language, where it does not and could not work, of the definable-indefinable dichotomy leads to trouble in ethics as it does elsewhere. For example, in *The Foundations of Ethics*, p. 5, Sir David Ross says "The question what is the relation between the attributes goodness and rightness is, however, only part of a larger question or series of questions which can be asked about either one of them. About each of them we can, to begin with, ask the question whether it is definable or indefinable". He seems never to have considered the possibility that they are neither. The whole book takes its course from a fundamentally wrong start.

If "N" is a shorthand word, then an expression of the form "N is . . ." will normally be taken as giving the *definition* of "N". On the other hand, if "N" is not a shorthand word there will be no such meaningful sentence of the form "N is . . .". Thus "electricity" is not a shorthand concept, and so there is no meaningful sentence of the form "electricity is . . ." in the way that "an oculist is . . ." can meaningfully be completed by "an eye-doctor" or "a chimney sweep", yielding a correct or incorrect statement. (Of course there are statements *about* electricity, such as "electricity is generated at Loch Sloy", but there is no temptation to regard them as statements "about the nature of electricity".) "Electricity is . . ." is a bad beginning for a statement, just as "virtue runs . . ." is.

N. R. Campbell saw this point very well. In a passage strikingly reminiscent of the one from Hertz, but in many ways far clearer, he says: "There are few of us who have not been asked, and considerably puzzled, by a familiar question from unscientific acquaintances, What is electricity? The most accomplished physicists are seldom ready with an answer; the right answer is that the question is unanswerable because it does not mean anything at all. The question is suggested only by the idea that sentences are capable of being analysed into constituents each of which has a separate significance, and, in particular, that any word which is grammatically a noun is capable of being the subject of some significant statement in the subject-predicate form. Our friend has heard statements made in which the word *Electricity* is used; and he jumps to the conclusion that this word can be extracted from the sentence, placed in another beginning 'Electricity is . . .', and that some sentence of this form must have a clear meaning." <sup>(6)</sup>

The concept of "force" loses its puzzling character once we don't try inappropriately to fit it into one of the definable-indefinable pigeonholes, and once we see the nature of the Newtonian laws, and how they, too, have been puzzling, because philosophers have tried to force them into inappropriate pigeonholes, this time into one or other of the analytic-synthetic pair. Hertz, on the other hand, thought<sup>(7)</sup> that the people who *used* the concept (as opposed to those who discussed it) were confused. He therefore constructed a mechanics in which the concept did not essentially occur. Though his system is intrinsically interesting, and I do not wish to question the value of his achievement, his chief motive was bad. There is no reason to suppose that the people who *use* the concept "force" are confused; the concept only appears confused when we are confused in *discussing* it, when we ask "is force definable or indefinable?" or "into which of the hitherto recognised logicians' pigeonholes do the laws of motion go?" Indeed there is scarcely any concept in physics (apart from the shorthand ones) about which philosophers



have not been impelled at one time or another to ask inappropriate questions, e.g. "what is Length?" "what is the real length of the metre rod?" "what is Time?" and so on. Hertz gets rid of the concept of force but uses concepts like position and distance about which the inappropriate form of question could just as easily be asked. Philosophical troubles will arise with these concepts, just as with those of "force" and "electricity", if we persist in asking inappropriate questions. It is not the physicists' concepts that have been confused; it has been the logicians who discussed them. But their confusion has led to illumination; in particular it has led us to see how language within mathematics (which has no truck with anything empirical) differs from language outside. Outside mathematics we are usually concerned with eventualities; since we cannot foresee eventualities our linguistic rules leave a region of indefiniteness.

#### References.

(<sup>1</sup>) Cf. Russell, *Principles of Mathematics*, p. 495: "This system (i.e. Hertz's) . . . far simpler and more philosophical in form than Newton's."

(<sup>2</sup>) *The Principles of Mechanics*, translated by D. E. Jones and J. T. Walley, pp. 7-8.

(<sup>3</sup>) The quoted passage comes from *Newton's Theory of Kinetics* by W. H. Macaulay. Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society, Vol. III, 1896-7. This is the clearest exposition of the Newtonian theory that I know of; my attention was drawn to it by Dr. S. E. Toulmin.

(<sup>4</sup>) I owe this illuminating phrase to Dr. S. E. Toulmin.

(<sup>5</sup>) I have discussed this matter in some detail in an article "Descartes and the Wax", *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 1.

(<sup>6</sup>) *Physics, The Elements*, p. 53.

(<sup>7</sup>) Though with reservations. See *The Principles of Mechanics*, pp. 8-9.

## REVIEWS

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AUTHORITY AND DELINQUENCY IN THE MODERN STATE. By Alex Comfort.  
(Kegan Paul, 1950. xii + 112 pp.) Price (U.K.), 8s. 6d.

Dr. Comfort's object in this essay is to enquire into the causes of "those elements in the behaviour of governments which lead to the international equivalent of crime", in particular to war and "war crimes". His starting-point is the existing body of knowledge about the psychological basis of the delinquency that shows itself in ordinary crimes and anti-social behaviour. His answer, briefly stated, is that even democratic political systems tend to select people with psychopathic tendencies for positions of power and authority, and to remove some of the checks to delinquent behaviour which ordinary life imposes on such people. And he holds that the remedy for the present state of affairs lies not in erecting a supranational government (which would merely give freer play to the delinquent tendencies of all centralised governments) but in a sort of anarchist policy of individual non-cooperation in delinquent actions, together with the encouragement of "sociality" in various ways.

Comfort distinguishes between crime, which consists in the breaking of a law, and delinquency, which is any form of behaviour-disorder that issues in anti-social conduct. "The chief factor which makes any overt act 'delinquent' is the assertion of the right of the actor to behave without regard to others" (p. 8). Some crimes are not delinquencies, and many delinquencies are not crimes but are in fact legally tolerated or even encouraged. "The opportunities for this kind of accepted and acceptable delinquency lie almost entirely within the pattern of power" (p. 8). Wherever coercion is an accepted part of social institutions there is a place for tolerated delinquency: police forces, and the machinery of enforcement generally, provide scope for tendencies which intrinsically (i.e. psychologically) are almost indistinguishable from those expressed in crime.

Comfort makes the important point that political leadership in a modern state is not based on "dominance", on the factors which determine leadership in simpler groups where there is direct and continuous contact between leader and led. In the modern state intellectual and physical superiority alike tend to be utilised in fields other than politics, and the "natural leader" is more likely to find his appropriate place in an executive rather than a legislative office.

The successful politician is rather the man who can create an illusion of leadership, and is likely to be the one who wants to be a leader but cannot lead those with whom he has direct contact: he is likely to be the man with fantasies about leadership. "The best adjusted members . . . occupy the back benches . . . . The rational leader may ultimately have a decreasing chance against the determined climber and the psychopath who reflects the attitude of the frustrated crowd, or who is living down his own failures of adjustment" (p. 38). A House of Commons with its intimate form of debate provides a better safeguard against psychopaths than the electorate, but this safeguard tends to disappear when and where debate becomes less important—for example in wartime, when decisions are taken in secret, and in legislatures with less orderly traditions than the Commons. Comfort goes into some interesting detail on the various types of psychopath and the parts they may play in government, referring at least implicitly to some well-known figures in recent British politics.

Discussing the "sociology of war", Comfort points out that war relieves many of the frustrations that are common in modern civilization—though it is the less well adjusted individuals who gain more from it—and in particular that it simplifies the problem of government by creating a real or fictitious unity of purpose. He insists that in general governmental decisions rather than "spontaneous upsurgings of public aggression" have caused the more disastrous delinquent acts of nations in recent years. (We may ask, however, whether these are the only two possible causes. Comfort's unstated assumptions seem to be that all social events have ultimately psychological causes, and that a socially delinquent act must arise from a psychological malady: but these may well be questioned.) He argues that public sentiment in favour of war and "war crimes" often has to be deliberately created. "The aggressive energies of frustrated civilizations and persons are responsible for wartime delinquency far more by enabling psychopaths to secure office and obedience than through direct outbursts of violence" (p. 57). This obedience springs from the individual's sense of impotence in the face of "the entire sales and enforcement organization" (p. 58). Later Comfort argues that the individual is not really as helpless as he often feels. Although irrational and destructive tendencies seem to predominate in contemporary society, there is "abundant evidence of the persistence of sociality", and once the irrationalities are felt as threats to individual life, "the fabric of institutions is threatened". "So long as the protest takes explicitly political forms its power of effecting real change is limited by the factors which we have discussed" (i.e. by the fact that political leaders are likely themselves to be the bearers of

irrational tendencies) but once the protest "manifests itself as public resentment, disillusion, or loss of obedience, . . . the mechanism of enforcement . . . is largely disarmed" (p. 64). Scientific workers are in a particularly strong position to weaken irrational institutions by non-cooperation, but "a major safeguard against delinquent national policies is endangered whenever scientific workers consent to delegate their judgment or cooperate with authority under conditions which lie outside their control" (p. 65).

"Enforcement-élites" play an important part. The legislators have delinquent fantasies, but could not themselves perform the delinquencies, any more than the majority of normal individuals who elect them. But the enforcement-élite has, as it were, the complementary fault: its members can commit and perhaps enjoy brutalities so long as they can project the responsibility for the decision to commit them onto the remote superiors. "Centralized societies have removed at least one of the most important bars to delinquent action . . . in the creation of a legislature which can enact its fantasies without witnessing their effects, and an executive which abdicates all responsibility for what it does in response to superior orders" (p. 63).

Comfort criticizes the view that the main function of the state is to promote sociality by coercion, suggesting that the emergence of individuals who want to coerce and of others who need to be coerced are parallel symptoms of abnormality. He supports this by pointing out that the really effective methods of preventing and curing delinquency (e.g. juvenile delinquency) are based on affection and cooperation rather than coercion, but that those in authority often refuse to consider the evidence in favour of these methods. They prefer prohibitions because they "have a deep-rooted community of desire with the delinquent". "Prohibition is a substitute for participation" (p. 84).

Now we may agree with a good deal of this, particularly with the account of the psychological mechanisms that may play a part in politics. But two questions at least may be asked. Just how extensively do the mechanisms described by Comfort operate in modern democratic society? To what extent do these mechanisms function as causes, and to what extent are they merely used by other social tendencies? Now Comfort does not discuss the second of these at all, and he admits that for various reasons he cannot bring detailed evidence to support the answer he suggests to the first. He is, therefore, stating hypotheses rather than confirming them, but of course the hypotheses spring from a background of psychological theory which is fairly adequately confirmed. This theory is mainly Freudian and post-Freudian: writers like Flügel and Fromm seem to have had a great influence on Comfort.



A serious criticism is that Comfort's basic contrast of social with anti-social or delinquent is too simple. Like Fromm (in *Man for Himself*, reviewed in this Journal in May, 1950) Comfort is looking for a qualitative distinction between kinds of behaviour or motive or character-structure, and is not satisfied with the merely relative criterion of adjustment to a given society. And he wants the distinction to be such that the good tendencies may be expected to support one another in all fields: he expects sociality developed in personal relations to prevent international atrocities. But Comfort's distinction seems less precise and less adequate than Fromm's, even when he links it with the contrast between "power-centred" and "life-centred" cultures (p. 80). The terms "sociality" and "life" are much too wide to be descriptions of tendencies that cooperate universally. And if a more precise account of the good tendencies were given, there would be less abundant evidence of their persistence. Comfort's optimism springs in part from this lack of precision. If we consider mere sociality, we find that quite genuine sociality within one group may accompany and even promote anti-sociality with respect to other groups. Many juvenile delinquents, for example, are outstandingly social and well adjusted within the delinquent group. And similarly Comfort's definition of delinquency (quoted above from p. 8) is indeterminate. Almost any act involves some regard for some people, and no act can include regard in every respect for all the "others" who may be affected by it. For a precise account of delinquency along these lines we require a statement of the kinds of interpersonal claims that should be respected.

When these confusions are cleared up, it will be seen that there can be quite genuine conflicts of interest between individuals or between social groups which are not due to any psychopathic tendencies. Conflict is not necessarily the result of a disorder that can be called "delinquency". Indeed Comfort very nearly recognises this when he admits that aggression is not necessarily bad (pp. 81-2). If this is so, then coercion may after all be an inevitable part of even a healthy society, and the sort of society that Comfort hankers after, where order is maintained wholly by public opinion and where delinquency is cured rather than repressed, might in fact be less free and provide less scope for productive tendencies (on which see Fromm) than our own. This may still be true even if coercion often encourages, among both law-breakers and law-enforcers, the delinquency it is supposed to repress.

Comfort is well aware that social science may be either a source of criticism of existing society or an instrument for the forwarding of some existing social policies, especially the more centralized and

totalitarian ones. He strongly supports the former tendency (taking the criticism to consist especially in showing how existing society falls short of sociality) and warns social scientists against the latter one. But again his optimism about the part scientists may play in opposing national and international delinquency seems to rest on lack of precision of thought. While we might argue that social science is (in some sense) essentially critical, it is simply not true that the majority of those we call social scientists participate to any considerable extent in this function of criticism.

But while, as I have indicated, many criticisms may be made of this book, and although the second part tries to cover too much ground in a few pages, it must be said that (unlike many sociological treatises) it discusses real issues in a forceful and challenging way.

JOHN MACKIE.

THE DISCOURSES OF NICCOLÓ MACHIAVELLI. Translated from the Italian with an introduction, chronological tables, and notes, by Leslie J. Walker, S.J. (Kegan Paul, 1950. Two volumes, xiii + 585 pp. and 390 pp.) Price (U.K.), £5 5s.

This is an admirable edition of the *Discourses on Livy*, and it should certainly be used by anyone who wishes to make a close study of this work. It includes a full subject index and index of proper names (which are very useful in view of Machiavelli's rather haphazard way of introducing topics), chronological tables covering all the events to which Machiavelli refers, genealogical tables, including one of Machiavelli's own family, a great deal of information about the sources used or probably used by Machiavelli, a list of passages that indicate the dates when the discourses were written, a list of the mistakes made by Machiavelli (only a few, as Fr. Walker points out), and some brief but interesting remarks on the precise meaning of various terms that he uses. The notes serve mainly to fill out the accounts given by Machiavelli of the events which illustrate his maxims—and occasionally the fuller account shows that the maxim is not after all confirmed by the example. They also give cross-references within the *Discourses*, and references to corresponding passages in the *Prince*, the *Art of War*, etc. On a number of points Fr. Walker summarizes Guicciardini's criticisms of Machiavelli's views.

As far as I can tell by checking a few passages taken at random, Fr. Walker's translation is much more accurate than those of Farnsworth and Detmold (of which the latter is reprinted in the Modern Library Edition): Fr. Walker repeatedly brings out the meaning where Detmold leaves it obscure. His style, however, is a

rather curious combination of the modern and colloquial with the archaic. Words like 'befall' and 'behoves', 'scare' used as an adverb and 'ambition' used as a verb, are found along with 'haves' and 'have-nots', 'liquidate', and so on.

Among the many topics discussed in the Introduction, two in particular call for further comment: these are Machiavelli's scientific method and his moral attitude.

Machiavelli's method is to try to find universal causal sequences, in terms of the surface phenomena of politics, and to present maxims based upon these. For example, no new régime is stable unless potential reactionaries are liquidated: therefore, if you want to set up a stable new régime you must "kill the sons of Brutus". Now Fr. Walker seems to admit the correctness of the method, though he disputes some of Machiavelli's conclusions. Indeed it is interesting to find that he originally intended not to translate the *Discourses* but to revise Machiavelli's political works, to test his maxims (and especially their validity for all periods) by adducing further empirical evidence.

But as Machiavelli himself found, the method meets with difficulties: the sequences that we observe are not universal. Impetuous behaviour is successful sometimes but not always: sometimes severity works best, sometimes mildness. If we lay down maxims that a ruler should act impetuously, or should be severe, or should be mild, we cannot be certain that they will work. In trying to cope with this difficulty, Machiavelli has recourse to the notion of fortune. Human forethought issues in actions in accordance with maxims: fortune is the factor other than human forethought which affects the outcome, which makes the maxims work sometimes but not always. But what is this factor? To this question Machiavelli gives or suggests a variety of answers.

It may be that he sometimes regards this factor as a more or less divine purpose, but Fr. Walker is surely wrong in suggesting (pp. 77-80) that he always means this. It would be absurd to compare such a purpose to a river in flood whose damaging effects could have been limited if proper dykes and banks had been prepared (cf. *Prince*, ch. 25). Similarly, Fr. Walker goes astray when he suggests that Machiavelli (in ch. 11 of the *Prince*) has discovered empirically that God looks after the church. He quite misses the bitter irony of the passage which asserts that ecclesiastical principalities flourish in spite of misgovernment because they are "sustained by higher causes", "exalted and maintained by God". The real meaning of these phrases is given by the preceding parallel one, "they are sustained by ancient religious customs, which are so powerful and of such quality

that they keep their princes in power in whatever manner they proceed and live". There is no support in the text for Fr. Walker's interpretation that the customs are only part of the explanation, that God is needed as well.

A second account of fortune, implied in the metaphor of the river in flood, and the preceding remark that fortune rules about half our actions, is that fortune is mere chance or randomness, something that cannot be calculated or allowed for, though in a rough way it can be provided against. To admit such a factor is of course to admit the failure of Machiavelli's method, to admit that no generalisations are strictly true. Fr. Walker misinterprets this passage too. He is right in saying that when Machiavelli says that a certain course is necessary he usually means that it is the only way of attaining a certain end. But when Machiavelli speaks of fortune being the arbiter of our actions he does not mean that circumstances constrain us to act in a certain way if we would succeed. The context shows this, for he is discussing the plea of the Italian rulers that they could not help the disasters that followed the French invasions, and this plea was not that fortune left them only one way out, but that it left them none.

Machiavelli's third and best answer is that what men call fortune is really "the character of the times" (*Prince*, ch. 25, *Discourses*, Bk. III, ch. 9, etc.). If so, it is not incalculable. In principle it could be observed and allowed for, though most men are psychologically incapable of this. That is, the falsified generalisations could be corrected by qualifying the subject: we could say that in times of a certain sort impetuous action is always successful. Now this is the treatment which would lead to advances in political theory, but it would involve some modification of Machiavelli's method: he would have to take account of features which are not on the surface, he would have to *study* the "character of the times" (the phrase as he uses it is a mere name for an unknown somewhat): and then his maxims would be less clear-cut, less handy as directives for action.

As I have indicated, Fr. Walker misreads Machiavelli's remarks about fortune; he also ascribes to Machiavelli a solution which, so far as I can see, he does not use. Fr. Walker gives as Axiom VIII in his formulation of Machiavelli's method, "In given circumstances the causes operating are so complex that it is impossible to tell for certain whether in the effect a given factor will predominate or not: the most we can do is to calculate the probabilities" (p. 99). But there is nothing about probabilities in the passage to which Fr. Walker refers (*Discourses*, Bk. I, ch. 6, § 6), which merely says that you cannot have everything you would like, and that you must weigh



the *disadvantages* of various courses of action against one another: if the population of a state is large, the constitution will be insecure, but if it is small, the state cannot acquire an empire.

I think that this is a central problem of method which Machiavelli does not solve, and I suspect that Fr. Walker fails to discuss it adequately because he too wants to formulate surface generalisations and simple maxims.

The question "what was Machiavelli's view of the relation of morality to politics?" is usually combined with the question "how immoral was Machiavelli's view?" Fr. Walker enters into the controversy on this point between Foster, Butterfield, Whitfield, and others, and his judgment seems to me more balanced and more correct than those of the other contestants. He does not, however, show how this controversy arises largely from the fact that no one has summarized accurately the different parts of Machiavelli's view. As far as I can see, there are four main parts.

First, Machiavelli insists on the distinction between a political maxim and a moral precept. Although he never puts it quite in this way, he is really distinguishing between hypothetical and categorical imperatives, but whereas Kant draws this distinction in order to preserve the purity of the latter type, Machiavelli draws it in order to preserve the purity of the former. He thinks that earlier political theorists have fallen into error by accepting, for example, the moral precept, "it is right to deal honestly on all occasions" and proceeding from it to the false political maxim, "if you want political success, always deal honestly". The political maxim depends upon a causal sequence, and causal sequences must be discovered empirically, they cannot be inferred from moral rules. This part of his view is sometimes misleadingly described as an attempt to keep morality out of politics.

Secondly, he has, as Fr. Walker says, a "high conception of what good government is" (p. 121). He holds that the establishment and maintenance of such government is the proper aim of a statesman: this is *par excellence* the good political end, and actions which tend towards this end should be performed, even if they are wrong in the sense of being contrary to the moral principles that are commonly recognised. It is in this sense that he holds that the end justifies the means. This is another part of his view that may be described, though still misleadingly, as an attempt to keep morality out of politics. It asserts, as it were, that politics has a morality of its own, which may frequently coincide with traditional morality, but does not always do so. But this second part is, of course, quite distinct from the first, though compatible with it.

A third part, which comes out in his condemnation of Agathocles (*Prince*, ch. 8) is that Machiavelli does regard cruelty, etc., as wrong,

irrespective of whether it does or does not lead to the politically good end. He seems to accept the traditional morality alongside the political morality of the second part, and to hold that "being named among the most famous men" requires a combination of the two kinds of virtue.

Fourthly, he distinguishes between corrupt and incorrupt societies. This distinction is not primarily an expression of a moral attitude, but an objective description, and one which is causally important, since corrupt and incorrupt societies work differently and have to be handled differently: for instance, the former lend themselves to monarchical, the latter to republican government. But of course Machiavelli does in fact approve of incorrupt societies, and disapprove of corrupt ones, so that secondarily this distinction expresses a moral attitude. And the morality involved is a pagan rather than a Christian one, though of course it coincides with Christian morality at many points. An incorrupt society is one in which the civic virtues flourish, where the citizens display military courage and discipline, pay their shares of the taxes honestly, advance their political demands firmly as such, in an open political struggle, but do not seek to satisfy them by treachery, intrigue, or fraud. In many ways the incorrupt society corresponds to the good government of the second part, but the emphasis here is on the habits of the society in general, rather than the methods or success of the government. Another difference is that in this fourth part of his view Machiavelli is developing a qualitative, not a teleological view: what he approves of here is the absence of corruption itself, whereas before he was approving of whatever tends towards the establishment or maintenance of the good state.

Now there can be no conflict between the first of these parts and each of the other three, but between the second, third, and fourth there are at least "disagreements in attitude", though there need be no theoretical conflict if the terms "politically right", "morally right", and "incorrupt" are sharply distinguished.

It is now fairly easy to see how the divergent estimates of the morality of Machiavelli's view arise. Those who regard it as immoral are attending to the second part, together with some of the generalisations that the first part makes possible. The murder of opponents is sometimes necessary for the establishment of a good state, what tends to the establishment of a good state is politically right, therefore the murder of opponents is sometimes politically right. Those who think that Machiavelli's view is perfectly respectable are thinking, as a rule, of the second part without associating it with these characteristically "Machiavellian" generalisations, and perhaps are

also taking account of the third and fourth parts. If we ask whether Machiavelli's views are or are not identical with those of respectable writers like Cicero, the answer must be that while the dictum *salus populi suprema lex* can mean nothing other than the second part of Machiavelli's view, Cicero only uses this principle when he particularly needs it, and accepts absolute moral principles at other times: also, he would probably disagree with some of the "Machiavellian" generalisations—a "disagreement in belief"

Fr. Walker makes sound points in criticism of some of these, but he certainly does not show that the "Machiavellian" maxims are never valid. He also thinks he has criticised the principle that a good effect justifies any means by pointing to the deplorable results of a general acceptance of the principle where views differ about what is good. "The dictum that 'a good end, if attainable, justifies the means' is a contradiction in terms, for it means that anyone who conceives himself to have a good end in view will be justified in taking any means to attain it, and that in consequence, since politically good ends are diversely conceived, disorders of a kind with which nowadays we are only too familiar, will become rampant" (p. 123). But of course the dictum does *not* mean this. What justifies the means, according to Machiavelli, is what happens (*effetto*), not what anyone intends, and it justifies only if it *is* good, not if it is conceived to be good. In any case a principle cannot be refuted by showing that belief in it, in certain circumstances, leads to bad results. A maxim may become useless if its general adoption defeats the end which it envisages, but "the end justifies the means" is not a maxim.

Fr. Walker is still more confused when he suggests (p. 8) that the fact that God guides the world provides a "higher criterion" than expediency, but supports this by saying that God ought to know better than Machiavelli how to promote security and prosperity—that is, God's guidance is relevant because it is *expedient* to follow it!

However, Fr. Walker's philosophical lapses do not seriously impair the value of this edition.

JOHN MACKIE.

PARADOXES OF THE INFINITE. By Dr. Bernard Bolzano. Translated with an Introduction by D. A. Steele, S.J., Ph.D. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950. x + 189 pp.) Price (U.K.), 21s.

THIS long-neglected work of Bolzano's is noteworthy for a pioneer attempt to develop a transfinite arithmetic. At a crucial juncture he unfortunately took an inadvisable path, thus preventing himself from anticipating the achievements of Cantor. The situation is as follows: with finite sets there are two criteria for equality which do not

conflict. Thus if two sets stand in the relation of proper part to whole, we can say that they are not equal. We can also say that if the elements of the two sets cannot be put in one-one correspondence, then the sets are not equal. With infinite sets, however, these criteria conflict. Thus the set of square numbers (1, 4, 9, 16, . . .) is a proper part of the set of whole numbers. On the other hand there is a one-one correspondence between the set of square numbers and the set of whole numbers, for to  $n^2$  in the one set we can correlate the number  $n$  in the other. Are we to say that the set of square numbers is less than the set of whole numbers or equal to it? A decision is required. Cantor, fruitfully, took the decision to say that sets are equal if and only if they can be put in one-one correspondence, and hence to say that in the case of transfinite sets the part may well be equal to the whole. The modern theory of infinite cardinals has developed on this basis. Bolzano unfortunately made the unfruitful decision to use "equal to" in such a way that it is correct to say that the set of square numbers is less than the set of whole numbers. To the philosopher the situation is instructive, for it presents a case where a linguistic decision became necessary, and where much hinged on what that decision was. Bolzano did not make a mistake when he said that the set of squares is less than the set of whole numbers in the way in which a man who said that it would rain on a day that in fact turned out fine would have made a mistake; he made a mistake in the way in which a man who goes for a walk which leads him into boggy and treacherous country instead of taking a path which leads him over a pleasant grassy hillside has made a mistake. If we go in Cantor's direction and make one-one correspondence our criterion of the equality of infinite sets, a more promising vista appears. Various operations, such as multiplication and raising to the  $N$ th power, can be defined, and a calculus of infinite cardinals can be developed. Bolzano, moving in his less promising direction, made some attempt at developing an infinite arithmetic, but his ideas were sterile. This can be seen if we look at the rather questionable remarks at the end of §29: "It will presumably be not less evident that the entire *set* (or multiplicity) of the quantities lying between two given ones, say 7 and 8, depends only on the distance  $8 - 7$  between those terminals and is hence equal (gleich) and necessarily equal to any other for which that distance is equal—and this despite the fact that it is an *infinite* set and thus incapable of determination by any number howsoever great. On this supposition, and denoting the set of all quantities lying between  $a$  and  $b$  by  $\text{mult}(b - a)$ , there must be numberless equations of the form  $\text{mult}(8 - 7) = \text{mult}(13 - 12)$ , as also of the form

$$\text{mult}(b - a) : \text{mult}(d - c) = (b - a) : (d - c),$$



against whose validity there is no sound objection." The appeal to self-evidence is of course regrettably unmathematical. The situation is that Bolzano has decided to say that the set of (rational?) numbers between  $a$  and  $b$  is equal to the set of (rational?) numbers between  $c$  and  $d$  if and only if  $b - a = d - c$ . Hence such "truths" as that  $\text{mult}(b - a) : \text{mult}(d - c) = (b - a) : (d - c)$  are trivialities, just as trivial, in fact, as the proposition that  $(b - a) : (d - c) = (b - a) : (d - c)$  (Of course with the modern definition of equality of sets, namely that by one-one correspondence, it becomes untrue to say that the set of rationals between  $a$  and  $b$  is equal to the set of rationals between  $c$  and  $d$  only if  $b - a = d - c$ . But of course Bolzano did not adopt this criterion of equality. So we may object to his results as being trivial and unfruitful, but not as being false.)

Bolzano makes certain attempts to introduce more rigour into the mathematics of his day, as when he introduces the definition of a derivative which is now familiar to schoolboys. His treatment of series is confused.

Is there a use of "infinite" which can be applied outside mathematics and which is nevertheless connected with the mathematical use (e.g. as in "infinite series", "infinite set")? Clearly there is. We can talk of an infinite possibility, and this use of "infinite" is connected with the mathematical one, for to talk about an infinite series is to talk about a continual possibility of constructing a fresh term, no matter how many terms one has already constructed. Similarly, Bolzano asserts in §13 that there is an infinite number of propositions, for we have 'A', "'A" is true', "'A" is true" is true,' and so on. But clearly what we have here is simply an infinite possibility of adding on the words "is true". Again when we talk about the infinity of the instants of time we are not talking about anything in the world but only about our dating system; we date by means of the rational numbers and it is of course true that there is an infinite possibility of constructing a rational number between two already constructed rational numbers. Bolzano seems to me to be groping towards this view, that "infinite" is an adjective that goes with "possibility", but his language is obscure and he sometimes wavers. Thus in §25 he says: "I now proceed to the assertion that there exists an infinite *even in the realm of the actual* . . . Anyone who had arrived at the momentous conviction . . . *that there exists a God* . . . agrees by this very fact upon the existence of a Being possessed of infinitude in more than one respect." I doubt very much, however, whether the sense in which one might call God "infinite" is at all closely connected with the mathematical sense of this word. Bolzano tries to connect it by saying that God knows

infinitely many propositions, and we have already seen that there is an infinite possibility of constructing fresh propositions. However, if we take all this literally, it does not prove an actual infinite. For even a human being may know infinitely many truths. To say that a person knows a proposition is to say, *e.g.*, that he could assert it if required to, not that he is asserting it, and quite clearly there is an infinite possibility of asserting fresh propositions of the form "'A' is true", or for that matter, of the form " $n + 1 = n$ ". So to prove infinite knowledge is by no means to prove an actual infinite.

The final part of the book (§§50 ff.) consists of a dubious amalgam of metaphysics and physical speculation, with evident confusion between truths of logic and truths of fact. For example, the inverse square law of attraction is "deduced" as though it was an *a priori* truth (§123). In §§123-4 Bolzano comments on the universal proportionality of the weight of a thing to its mass, no matter what substance it is made of, though he dismisses it by recourse to a somewhat extraordinary and untestable hypothesis. Even so, one must admire him for having been struck by the importance of this peculiar though very familiar fact, though of course it required later developments in physics and the genius of Einstein before its real significance could be seen.

This translation of the *Paradoxion* has an interesting introduction by Fr. D. A. Steele, S.J. (though unfortunately it is written in an excruciatingly pedantic style) and a useful bibliography. I noticed one misprint, "3/4" for "4/3" in §44 of the translation, but as the whole of this paragraph of Bolzano's is haywire anyway no harm is done!

J. J. C. SMART.

THE PERENNIAL SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY. By Karl Jaspers. Translated by Ralph Manheim. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950. x + 180 pp.) Price (U.K.), 10s. 6d.

This book consists of six lectures, five of which were delivered at the University of Basle, where Jaspers is Professor of Philosophy. It is an attempt—always earnest, occasionally profound, but more often confused—to commend philosophy as an autonomous discipline and to establish harmonious relations between it and religion. The enterprise leaves him prone between two stools, with little gratitude from the theologians and still less from the philosophers. It is to be hoped, however, that in both camps his sense of the gravity of the issues involved, his concern for tradition and communication, and his hatred of fanaticism will be appreciated.

Perhaps the defects of these lectures could be summed up by saying that, despite an emphasis on tension and struggle which might

lead us to expect a sharpening of differences, Jaspers' existentialist and religious presuppositions have prevented him from making the necessary distinctions with clarity and firmness. Just when we expect him to come to grips with major issues, he veils himself in the mist of an obscure and tortuous terminology and escapes, leaving us with an unsatisfactory account both of philosophy and religion and of the relations between them. This defect in logic, however, is not surprising in a school which, along with many others in the modern world, has turned its back on the Greeks with their clear perception of things qualitatively differentiated yet not "cut off from one another with a hatchet", as Anaxagoras put it (frag. 8, Diels). Indeed, quite early in Jaspers' discussion, after a vigorous preliminary defence of philosophic independence, we are startled by what at first sight appears to be a complete abandonment of philosophy. We are invited "to attempt the impossible" with the author, "to attempt within the confines of object thinking, the only thinking of which we are capable, to transcend this thinking, to go beyond the object with the implements of object thought . . ." (p. 17). On examination, we find that this is an extremely loose way of commending existential thinking as against the ordinary scientific thinking, which, it is maintained, is concerned only with phenomenal objects. The Greek method of "saving the appearances", of patiently trying to do justice to all the observable facts, is to be exchanged for a streamlined transcendental mode which whisks thought beyond scientific observation and eliminates the tiresome formality of having to present passports of precise definition and characterization. Existential thinking, it seems, is a mysterious something whose qualities cannot be specified and which appears to dissolve into the "Ineffable" (or unspeakable) of the mystics. Like Marcel, Jaspers approximates philosophy (or, rather, metaphysics) to mysticism and, for all his brave show of championing the independence of the philosophical spirit, is in danger (as we shall see later) of amalgamating it with religion.

In working out his position, Jaspers generalizes Kierkegaard's attack on Hegel, and tries to put an edge on his sword with a Kantian whetstone. He discards objective knowledge, with its classification of beings into general categories (*e.g.*, the human being in general), and replaces it with the notion of existents who are torn asunder by doubt and distraction and who cannot communicate with each other directly, but only in secret, ambiguous assertions, invocations, or appeals from beyond an abyss. On this thesis, existence never becomes an object, but represents the fundamental resurgence (*Ursprung*) of the individual's thinking and acting. In contrast with the realist rejection of essences, things-in-themselves, etc., the Kantian

distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is assumed throughout, as in all existentialist systems. But where, for Kant, our experience of moral freedom introduces us to the noumenal world, in the various existentialist philosophies that function is fulfilled by the experience of individual existence, which is a ceaseless transcendence, a passing beyond to new "stages of being" as the result of "free choice". In Jaspers' thesis this becomes experience of *das Umgreifende*, the Comprehensive, that which includes and transcends the subject-object split. Unfortunately, if we ask for a definition or demonstration of the Comprehensive which we thus experience, it is not forthcoming. Instead, we are offered "philosophical faith", which is allied with knowledge and comprehends both subject and object; it is the leap from thinking to being, so that existentialism is advocated as a way of thinking which is at the same time a way of being. Consciousness is discussed as a mode of the Comprehensive. "We are the comprehensive consciousness, in which everything that is can be known, recognized, intended as an object" (p. 18). Most existentialists are uncertain and vacillating about the status of consciousness, treating it now as a quality, now as a relation. Elsewhere, Jaspers, followed by Marcel, holds that existence by its very nature implies consciousness of the world and of other beings, consciousness being taken as a movement or attitude towards something else; in this movement or attitude it becomes specific and realizes possibilities or "takes on an essence" (Paul Foulquie, *Existentialism*, trs. by Kathleen Raine, 1948, pp. 52, 53). Here what begins as relational is speedily transformed into a quality. In the volume under review the qualitative estimate is prominent (pp. 18, 29, 32, etc.). Again, the ghost of British "sensationalism", despite repeated exorcisms, returns to haunt Jaspers' Kantianism in these and similar sentences: "As mind, I am filled with ideas, through which I capture the idea that confronts me . . . . Where ideas vanish, the world collapses into an infinity of scattered objects" (p. 21), as if things could exist, whether perceived or not, without interrelation and interaction. Perhaps all that he means is that the discovery of linkages requires thought. Equally curious is his theory of the distinction between philosophy and science. Philosophy, it appears, performs the leap of faith which carries it beyond and behind object knowledge (science), a leap which suggests religion rather than philosophy. Jaspers admits that science and philosophy ("methodical thought") are inseparable; "but", he continues, "they are not the same thing; philosophy is neither a specialized science along with others, nor a crowning science resulting from the others, nor a foundation-laying science by which the others are secured" (p. 171). But surely the difference can be stated in a way that will do justice to the common origin and



subsequent closely related development of the two disciplines. Philosophy is the science of sciences because, as Passmore has shown (this JOURNAL, Vol. XVII, No. 3), its specific activity is the criticism of categories and its special, empirical subject-matter is discourse. It was by attending to its own business of clarifying discourse and engaging in critical inquiry that philosophy discovered and opened up the various fields of study which later became the independent sciences. Jaspers is scarcely more convincing in the attempt to distinguish philosophy from religion, and to trace their interrelations. He contends that, though the Bible is almost entirely lacking in philosophical self-consciousness (p. 101), yet it and the religion it inspired are a foundation of Western philosophy (p. 95). It is no accident that all the great philosophers of the West up to and including Nietzsche had a thorough knowledge of the Bible (p. 109; cf. T. S. Eliot's claim in *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, p. 122, that "only a Christian culture could have produced a Voltaire or a Nietzsche"). The decay of religious faith seriously weakened the philosopher's means of communication, since the religious tradition assimilated in early life becomes the vehicle also of philosophy, which, in turn, criticizes and clarifies the tradition (pp. 109, 110). What Jaspers is getting at here, I think, is the fact that our "values" have been transmitted in a largely Christian setting, with personal emphases foreign to the abstract thought of philosophy. I should suggest that the religious tradition becomes a vehicle of philosophy only in the sense that some of the questions with which philosophy wrestles are also dealt with in biblical religion, but in a way that strikes the philosopher as singularly light-hearted and irresponsible, since assertion without argument is employed throughout. As for the "thorough knowledge of the Bible" enjoyed by Western philosophers, of course it was "no accident"; like their understanding of the classics, where "values" antedated Christianity, it was completely determined and so forms a subject for scientific investigation. The study of conditioning factors is interesting and important; but it is quite irrelevant to the truth or falsity of beliefs. The logical question remains, untouched by such considerations: "Is this proposition true? Is this the case?" If God has spoken (and Jaspers believes that he has, though, unfortunately, his speech is "utterly ambiguous", p. 138), then his message can be conveyed only in propositions which at once become exposed, equally with other propositions, to the most ruthless philosophical criticism. Always it remains a question of truth or falsehood, fact or fallacy. The attempt to claim for Christianity the credit of producing the men who denied it amounts to no more than a specification of some conditioning factors to the exclusion of others, notably the tradition of Greek critical thought, which maintains a

vigorous and independent life in opposition to all authoritarian systems.

The "philosophical faith" which Jaspers sets over against the religious variety recalls Kierkegaard's view of natural faith as purely historical, as a primal awareness of being mediated by history and thought. Faith thus conceived is said to be strengthened by each unique historical event to which it is related, and in each historical situation it is concerned not with the subject-object connection but with interpersonal relations. For it, philosophical systems can be nothing more than an inspiration or confirmation. "It achieves no rest in a body of doctrine. It remains a venture of radical openness" (p. 16); that is, it remains a process of inquiry which apparently never reaches conclusions. Unable to secure for us the objective possession of eternal truth in a world of time, it is "for ever immersed in a dialectical process of fusion and negation" (p. 23)—a perpetual baptism whence it never emerges to establish itself on the dry ground of positive, clearly defined theory. Its "complete openness of communication" of course renders impossible the act of self-committal to a personal God required by religious faith. But it amounts to a repudiation of philosophy when the precise formulation of theory is rejected. The unsatisfactory character of Jaspers' theoretical position is nowhere more clearly seen than at this point. In arguing against it, the propositional nature of all discourse would be demonstrated. The philosopher expresses his belief or theory in propositions which he asserts as true; and he is not afraid to reject the contrary as false. He is no less definite than the religious believer, but he is never "dogmatic"; i.e., he contends that propositions are always discussable, that there are no infallibilities, no penalties upon affirmation, doubt, or denial except the nemesis which waits upon shoddy thinking. Again, despite his attempt to draw a clear line of demarcation between philosophy and religion, between philosophical faith and religious faith, there are hints in Jaspers' formulation of an eventual reconciliation, with the balance of advantage for religion. His colleague at Basle, Karl Barth, would have the philosopher on his knees bemoaning his sins and admitting that man by searching cannot find God. The philosopher must submit his thinking to his relation to a personal God. This invitation to philosophy to commit suicide comes from both sides of the "household of faith". In an article on "Philosophical Pluralism and Catholic Orthodoxy" in *The Month*, July, 1950, Fr. D'Arcy declares that "... the service of philosophy is a humble and ancillary one, and it is for the Bride of Christ [the Church] in its knowledge of union and love, to pick and choose from the best thought of the world what records truly and orchestrates the divine mystery". He describes philosophy as a "humble", "faithful" "servant of divine

truth", to be used only after a thorough soaking in ecclesiastical dogmas which, in his opinion, will foster along with the passion for truth "a discriminating power which is superior to the mere reception of what is handed on in philosophy". Jaspers does not join in this smooth advocacy of philosophical degradation; indeed, as we have noted, he strives, in a confused way, to safeguard critical independence. But his failure to make the necessary distinctions, his preoccupation with metaphysics rather than with logic, brings capitulation to theology within sight. In his formulation of philosophical faith, he says that "our enduring task is to become authentic men by becoming aware of being, or, and this is the same thing, to become ourselves by achieving certainty of God", thus identifying "awareness of being" with religious experience. He argues that, just as the Christian's ground is revelation (something "given"), so the philosopher's ground is also something "given" (the Comprehensive, that which includes and transcends the world of tension and demand). It has become popular in theological circles, following the lead of Baron F. von Hügel (in modern times), to speak of the "given" in this way; but if, with Anderson (this JOURNAL, Vol. V, No. 4, p. 252), we substitute "observed" for "given", we shall be saved from a quite unwarranted and unnecessary analogy. There is also a connection between the Christian's ultimate goal in the "peace of God" and Jaspers' "Peace of mind is the aim of philosophical thought" (p. 162). Philosophy, no less than religion, "aims at enabling a man to face death" (p. 154). And "at all times" philosophy aims at achieving individual independence (p. 159). Perhaps nowhere is Jaspers' approximation of philosophy to religion more apparent than in this introduction of *mission* into philosophy (repudiated, however, in a moment of clear insight, on p. 158); he himself poses the question, "What should philosophy do in the present world situation?" (p. 153), and discusses its "present mission" (pp. 160 ff.). Brunner well says that "a Church exists by mission as a fire by burning" (quoted by Prof. H. Davies, *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1950). By contrast, philosophy has no "aim", no "mission", no reforming zeal; it simply engages in activities of critical inquiry and discourse. Evangelism, preaching, advocacy, propaganda—and, we may add, the substitution of personal relations for abstract thought, the combination of the determined and the "free" in the one world, the fencing off of the "sacred" from critical examination—these things may afford a precarious existence to religion, but they spell death to philosophy.

So far as theism is concerned, Jaspers admits the breakdown of the traditional theistic proofs, leaving a gap, as yet unfilled. "Since Kant's magnificent confutation of all arguments for the existence of God, since the brilliant but comfortable and false restoration of these

proofs by Hegel, since the revived interest in the mediaeval proofs, a philosophical reformulation of the arguments for the existence of God has become an urgent necessity" (p. 36). Why this is such an urgent necessity is not clear, for in the paragraph preceding this statement he contends that we never reach scientifically cogent proof of God's existence. "A proved God is no God. Accordingly: only he who starts from God can seek him. A certainty of the existence of God, however rudimentary and intangible it may be, is a premise, not a result of philosophical activity." This is on a par with his earlier contention (p. 34) that inability to prove God's existence does not deprive the theistic arguments of their "validity as ideas", that is, of their power to enlighten minds and transform personalities. The emphasis is on the uplifting results of admittedly false theories, not on finding out what is the case. Jaspers' own suggestions towards the "philosophical reformulation" which he advocates are disappointingly slight and vague. He does not show how "the fundamental mysteries of the cosmos are brought to awareness as stepping stones to God", whatever that may mean. And it is not in the least clear why thinking, "understood as awareness of Being", must then be "deepened into an awareness of God", when it has not been shown that there is a God to be aware of. Nor is his logic impressive when he seeks to "explain" the world, not by its qualities, but by some person "behind" or "beyond" it. Again, why must we view the distinction between good and evil "in its full import as a commandment of God", when no attempt has been made to demolish the arguments in favour of a positive, scientific ethics which owes nothing to theological dogma? Incidentally, a positive ethics, no less than sociology and psychology, would have a good deal to say about the mysterious "absolute imperative" for which "neither finite aims nor authority can account" (p. 37). Finally, it is the devotee rather than the philosopher who confronts human failure with the alternative of "nothingness or God" (p. 35). A fundamental weakness of existentialism in general and of Jaspers' "school" in particular is its lack of a social sense, its neglect of the social movements and ways of life which catch up individuals and bend them to their will. Because of this ingrained individualism, existentialism fails to see that the social is the "supernatural", the deity whose "saving precepts" are the requirements which the group exacts of its members and seeks to impose on other groups. In any case, rejection of the supernatural, far from leading to cultural impoverishment, may free the inquirer for a richer and more enterprising life. Here Jaspers has apparently forgotten what he wrote in defence of philosophic autonomy in the opening paragraph of his book, where he passionately declares that if the alternative were, as one theologian asserted it to be, "Christ or



nihilism", philosophy would be impossible. Jaspers' proposed rehabilitation of theism has gone the way of the classical proofs; and I think the same can be said of all other modern attempts. The only line on which there is the faintest glimmer of light (so it seems to me) is the pluralist theism adumbrated, *e.g.*, by William James in the concluding lecture of, and postscript to, his *Varieties of Religious Experience*; but even here it is difficult to take a step forward without falling into mythology.

G. STUART WATTS.

THE ORIGINS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Alfred Loisy. Translated by L. P. Jacks. (Allen and Unwin, 1950. 332 pp.) Price (U.K.), 18s.

Alfred Loisy was excommunicated by Pope Pius X in 1908 for "obstinate defiance" of authority in teaching "many things pernicious to the main foundations of Christian faith". Accepting his excommunication with equanimity, he continued his critical study of the New Testament while occupying the Chair of the History of Religions at the Collège de France; 1909-1927, and afterwards in retirement till his death in 1940. An immense amount of detailed critical work on the various books of the New Testament preceded and is taken for granted in this and in the companion volume on *The Birth of the Christian Religion* (1934; trns. by Dr. Jacks and published in England in 1948). Failure to recognize this has led some British scholars, from whom better things might have been expected, to lay charges of dogmatism against Loisy. It would perhaps not be rash to predict that, in its main outlines, Loisy's thesis will eventually emerge without serious damage from the searching scrutiny to which it is being subjected, though the same could not be said of various details of the argument. For instance, it will be interesting to see whether Loisy's late date for the Fourth Gospel (not before A.D. 135-140) can be sustained in view of the recent discovery of a fragment of MS. (Pap. Ryl. Gk. 457), which has been assigned with some confidence to the first half of the second century by C. H. Roberts, of the John Rylands Library, and is held by Vincent Taylor to prove that the Gospel was known in Egypt soon after A.D. 100 (*Hibbert Journal*, July, 1950). Further, it would be difficult to name another work in antiquity whose contents have been handled by literary and historical critics with the same watchful suspicion and determined scepticism evinced by Loisy in his treatment of the New Testament. Such matters, however, need not detain us, as they do not concern the student of philosophy as such.

Loisy's general position may be indicated in a brief summary. The four Gospels are not biographies of Jesus, but cult manuals, ritual catechisms, compiled for the instruction of believers at a time when

the Church had established itself as the mystery or sacramental brotherhood of *Kyrios Christos*. ("It is very significant", writes Prof. Gilbert Murray in his preface to *The Birth of the Christian Religion*, "that the language of the New Testament is Greek. . . . The idea of a Son of God born to save the world is essentially a Greek idea.") Of the historic Jesus little is known except that he taught publicly for a very brief period, performed acts of healing exorcism, and was crucified by Pontius Pilate as a revolutionary. The capital sentence was imposed and carried out because Jesus, like his predecessor, John the Baptist, had proclaimed the imminent advent of the "Kingdom of God", a new order of justice and peace which God himself would establish in Israel and extend throughout the world. This meant that the power of Rome would be broken and the "Chosen People", under the Messiah, would be supreme. The Gospels were not written until some three-quarters of a century after the transformation of the historic Jesus into the risen Christ, ready to come in power and great glory to inaugurate the Kingdom. Neither in the Gospels nor in the rest of the New Testament are we told "how Jesus himself brought into being the faith of which he soon became the object", "since all these writings presuppose the faith as already acquired and give no direct information as to how the first faith came into being" (p. 288). There is a fundamental and far-reaching distinction between the primitive eschatological catechesis (the proclamation of the risen, glorified Christ, shortly coming to inaugurate the Kingdom and manifest his glory), and the later evangelical catechesis (the throwing back of this epiphany of divine glory into the earthly life of Jesus, reaching its climax in his death and resurrection). In the first there is a progression towards epiphany, as the climax; in the other, the epiphany is there from the beginning. (The Fourth Gospel goes farther and presents us with a Christ who was a *divine being* from the outset). The two catecheses are intertwined and coloured by *gnosis* in the sources as we have them, and Loisy applies himself with scholarly acuteness, subtlety and skill to the task of distinguishing them and evaluating their significance. Along with his compatriot and fellow critic, Charles Guignebert, he has succeeded in presenting a consistently "naturalist" alternative to the "supernaturalist" account of Christian origins, with its uncritical jumble of miracles and natural phenomena, history and legend, myth and meditation, fact and fiction, and of documents "Improved" in the interests of piety and edification. Loisy's critical method, reversing, as it does, the traditional New Testament perspective, enables us to find our way through the labyrinth and make sense of it. Because of this radical challenge to received opinions, it will not appeal to those who want to read (or write) their biblical criticism to the

sound of church bells. They will continue to neglect Loisy in favour of the numerous works in this field which offer the consoling assurance that "reverent criticism" strengthens religious faith and confirms theological doctrine. Thus fortified, they will continue to use the New Testament in a way which biblical criticism has rendered impossible for the serious inquirer.

Of more interest, however, to the student of philosophy than the detailed biblical work is Loisy's introductory discussion of "the Bible as supernatural". He distinguishes two "supernaturals", one magical (miracles, portents, etc.), the other moral and spiritual, "manifested by the religions of humanity in marvellous outbursts of spiritual life", so intense in Judaism and Christianity as to render these two faiths unique. We are not told why he considered it necessary to use the word "supernatural" in this sense; it would make for clarity of thought if its use were restricted to the full-blooded orthodox sense. He has little difficulty in exposing the absurdity of belief in the divine authorship of books, and in showing that "along the whole line of historical and literary criticism, the traditional doctrine is in complete collapse" (p. 12). He contrasts the modern scientific view of the universe with the ancient cosmogonies, but gives no arguments in support of his contention that the former affords a much more satisfactory basis for belief in God. In human history he discerns "a revelation of wonders greater than all the mythical schemes of salvation" (p. 30). Purified of "the false supernatural", religion will vitalize humanity through the Christian ideal. When we ask what this "Christian ideal" is, we are told that we may find it in the reign of justice, realized by the law of love. In the Gospels, however, this ideal is clothed in eschatological form, in utopian colours, and is realized by magic. Now, the notion of a "reign of justice" and a "law of love" is by no means peculiar to Christianity; all that is distinctively Christian about it, on Loisy's own showing, is the outmoded form in which it is presented in the Gospels. Further, in Pauline or pseudo-Pauline writings, the ideal is expressed (though in mythical garb) as inward peace born of a sense of "the profound value of the regenerated soul", and "of spiritual life under the law of justice and love" (p. 31). Again, where is the specifically Christian content here, since this ideal is professed by all the great world religions? The same is true of the vision of a universal brotherhood of believers, of which papalist Catholicism, Loisy maintains, is but a "caricature": Christianity has no monopoly of this vision. Loisy proceeds to identify "the essence of Christianity" with "the essence of the religion of humanity, advancing to perfection", whatever the relative term "perfection" may mean. It is interesting to see this latter-day emphasis on "essence" by one who years ago argued so brilliantly (in *The*

*Gospel and the Church*) against the Liberal Protestant Harnack, that the "essence" of a religion is to be found in its entire development and not in some spiritual kernel or core. The view that early Christianity exhibited "a human ideal far superior to that of the pagan religions and the speculations of Greek wisdom" (*loc. cit.*) can be sustained (at any rate, with regard to "Greek wisdom") only if one exalts exhortation above theory, and dogmatic assertion above critical investigation. Loisy nowhere tells us what he means by "God", "the divine principle of love", "communion with God", etc. (p. 32). Indeed, he was largely indifferent to the theoretical status of theism and belief in immortality (*Mémoires*, III, 23, 24; quoted by M. D. Petre, *Alfred Loisy*, 1944, p. 85), and regarded the scholastic proofs of theism as inconclusive (*Choses Passées*, p. 313; quoted by Petre, *op. cit.*, p. 86). He substituted for them belief in "a principle of evolution not immanent in the world, but transcendent to the point of possessing infinite being, independently of the universe which it created"—a confused rationalist notion, vastly inferior to scholastic rationalism, which at least *attempted* to be precise. The fact is that while the Modernists rightly rejected the rationalism of Aquinas, and (notably in the case of Tyrrell) endeavoured to vindicate the "irrational", they had never thought out their own position logically and so were unable to confront their orthodox opponents with a carefully argued alternative. In his controversy with the Vatican, Loisy could claim justly that he and his fellow-Modernists approached biblical questions from the historical and literary angle, not from the philosophical; but they deceived themselves in fondly imagining that their work did not raise far-reaching philosophical (and theological) issues. They wished to remain in the Church while destroying its foundations, just as Loisy, in this volume, seeks to retain the name "Christian" while emptying it of its content. In maintaining to the very end his protest against rationalism, Loisy failed entirely to realize that his own theoretical position, so far as he had developed it, was no less rationalist than that which he opposed.

G. STUART WATTS.



## AROUND THE JOURNALS

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R. Peters (*Mind*, 237) traces the effects in psychology of what Popper calls "observationalism", showing how it was accepted by both sides in the behaviourist-introspectionist controversy, and more recently gave rise to operationism: he argues that observationalism, carried too far, hampers the progress of science by preventing people from formulating hypotheses. H. R. F. Harrod (*Philosophy*, 96) tries to reconstruct the theory of induction, while various treatments of the "problem of induction" are discussed by G. Buchdahl (*Mind*, 237), who concludes that the whole issue is concerned with the choice of a suitable logical grammar. Locke's account of primary and secondary qualities is corrected by W. Kneale (*Philosophical Quarterly*, I, 2); his account of personal identity is criticised by A. Flew (*Philosophy*, 95), and in the same number G. J. Whitrow insists (far too briefly) on the synthetic aspect of mathematics. J. J. C. Smart (*Phil. Q.*, I, 1) argues that Descartes' problem about the piece of wax is due to his demanding a definition where none is either necessary or possible. P. T. Geach (*Mind*, 236), making a sharp distinction between names and predicates, points to what he regards as many errors in both traditional and modern treatments of the subject-predicate relation. Prichard's *Knowledge and Perception* receives a Critical Notice from H. H. Price (*Mind*, 237), and is reviewed by A. D. Woozley (*Phil. Q.*, I, 2) and by C. H. Whiteley (*Philosophy*, 95), while Woozley's *Theory of Knowledge* is condemned by J. N. Findlay (*Mind*, 237) for not being linguistic enough. Schlick's *Philosophy of Nature* (put together from lecture notes) is reviewed very adversely by J. Myhill (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XI, 2). Kneale's *Probability and Induction* is reviewed by D. M. Cousin (*Phil. Q.*, I, 2) and Reichenbach's rewritten *Theory of Probability* by Donald C. Williams (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 2), where Max Black's *Language and Philosophy* is also reviewed by A. Pap. W. Sellars finds Pap's *Elements of Analytic Philosophy* rather a hotch-potch (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 1).

In moral philosophy, subjectivism still holds the centre of interest. Blanshard (*Phil. Q.*, I, 2) repeats some well-known criticisms of two forms of the theory, Stevenson and Brandt continue their discussion in *Philosophical Review*, 352, where the main issues are whether there ever is independent emotive meaning and in what senses reasons may be relevant to an ethical judgement: Stevenson points out that in one sense to say that a reason is relevant is to make another ethical

judgement. R. C. Cross (*Philosophy*, 95) discusses the nature of ethical disagreement, while T. D. Weldon in the same number says there is no real controversy between objectivism and subjectivism. D. H. Monro (*Analysis*, 19) shows that relativism asserts a moral principle of impartiality with regard to attitudes, which a subjectivist could not consistently accept.

Among other contributions to moral philosophy, we note Lord Lindsay's plea (*Phil. Q.*, I, 2) that philosophy should again concern itself with the criticism of standards—standards, he thinks, may be at once authoritative and progressive—and C. D. Broad's Critical Notice of Prichard's *Moral Obligation* (*Mind*, 236); Jourdan's *The Good Life* is discussed at length by C. Perry (*Phil. Rev.*, 352) and reviewed by T. M. Knox (*Phil. Q.*, I, 2). G. H. von Wright presents an "elementary formal logic of the deontic modalities", i.e. formalises the relationships between such terms as 'permitted', 'forbidden', and 'obligatory', and states some rules about their use.

W. J. Rees (*Mind*, 236) argues that the concept of sovereignty is required in political theory, and may be defended against the standard criticisms if the different senses of sovereignty are properly distinguished. T. A. Cowan (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 2) criticises the "pure theory of law" in the interests of an experimental legal science; J. D. Hyman (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 1), reviewing *The Jurisprudence of Interests* (by Rümelin and others), shows the parallel development of legal thought in Germany and America; E. N. Garlan (*Journal of Philosophy*, 47, 23) reviews recent work on the philosophy of law by Stone, Frank, Hall, and Cairns, while Cairns' book is also reviewed by J. C. Clapp (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 2). C. Frankel (*J. Phil.*, 47, 24) defends Sabine's value-theory against some of the criticisms made by his pupils in *Essays in Political Theory presented to George H. Sabine*.

In aesthetics, H. D. Aiken develops a modified satisfaction theory and H.D.A. (*J. Phil.*, 47, 23) criticises the expressionism of Carritt's *Introduction to Aesthetics*, which is reviewed more favourably by M. C. Nahm (*Phil. Rev.*, 352). M. J. Stolnitz (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 1) asks how works of art may have a subject-matter which is ugly, and distinguishes ugliness which is "invincible" from that which is not. J. Myhill (*Phen. Res.*, XI, 1) says that Schillinger's *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* is the most exhaustive treatment ever written of the view that beauty consists in certain fairly simple formal relations.

F. S. Haserot (*Phil. Rev.*, 352) argues that Spinoza's view of universals is a realist and not a nominalist one, and shows how this affects the interpretation of his whole philosophy; A. S. Ferguson (*Phil. Q.*, I, 1) opposes Prichard's assimilation of Plato's ethical position in the *Republic* to a form of utilitarianism; P. P. Hallie



(*Phil. Q.*, I, 2) expounds the philosophy of Maine de Biran and in particular his criticism of the British Empiricists; and G. S. Kirk (*Mind*, 237) argues that Heraclitus was more concerned with "measure" than with flux.

We welcome the appearance of the first two numbers of *The Philosophical Quarterly*, sponsored by the *Scots Philosophical Club* and edited by T. M. Knox. They contain five articles each, a large number of short reviews, and the two parts of a survey by D. J. Allan of recent work in Greek Philosophy.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

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(Mention in this list neither precludes nor guarantees later review.)

PSYCHOTIC ART. By Francis Reitman. (Kegan Paul, 1950. x + 180 pp.) Price (U.K.), 16s.

LOGIC AND LANGUAGE. Edited by A. G. N. Flew. (Blackwell, 1951. vii + 206 pp.) Price (U.K.), 16s.

A collection of articles representing the linguistic movement.

LANGUAGE AND INTELLIGENCE. By John Holloway. (Macmillan, 1951. xv + 192 pp.) Price (U.K.), 12s. 6d.

A discussion of these subjects in the Rylean manner, which criticises "conceptualist" theories.

A HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS. Edited by Vergilius Ferm. (Philosophical Library, 1950. xiv + 642 pp.) Price, \$6.00.

THE PHILOSOPHIES OF F. R. TENNANT AND JOHN DEWEY. By J. O. Buswell, Jr. (Philosophical Library, 1950. xvii + 516 pp.) Price, \$6.00.

MODERN PHILOSOPHERS: WESTERN THOUGHT SINCE KANT. By Howard C. McElroy. (Russell F. Moore, 1950. xii + 268 pp.) Price, \$4.00.

JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA. By Marie Louise Berneri. (Kegan Paul, 1950. xi + 339 pp.) Price (U.K.), 16s.

A critical discussion (from an anarchist point of view) of a large number of utopias, including some that are well known and some that are not.

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT G. INGERSOLL. Edited by Eva Ingersoll Wakefield. (Philosophical Library, 1951. xii + 747 pp.) Price, \$7.50.

VERSUS: REFLECTIONS OF A SOCIOLOGIST. By H. P. Fairchild. (Philosophical Library, 1950. xv + 203 pp.) Price, \$3.75.

THE PRODIGAL CENTURY. By H. P. Fairchild. (Philosophical Library, 1950. xvii + 258 pp.) Price, \$3.75.

THE LEGACY OF MAIMONIDES. By Ben Zion Bokser. (Philosophical Library, 1950. ix + 128 pp.) Price, \$3.75.

ORIGIN OF HISTORY AS METAPHYSIC. By Marjorie L. Burke. (Philosophical Library, 1950. 61 pp.) Price, \$2.75.

THE DAWN OF PHILOSOPHY. By Georg Misch. (Kegan Paul, 1950. xi + 333 pp.) Price (U.K.), 25s.

An account of the beginnings of philosophy in Chinese, Indian, and Greek thought, with some modern parallels: this is an expansion of a work first published in German in 1926.

ADLER'S PLACE IN PSYCHOLOGY. By Lewis Way. (Allen and Unwin, 1950. 334 pp.) Price (U.K.), 18s.

A PHILOSOPHY OF FORM. By E. I. Watkin. (Sheed and Ward, 1950. xi + 442 pp.) Price (U.K.), 21s.

Enlarged third edition: first published in 1938.

TECHNIQUE OF PSYCHOANALYTIC THERAPY. By Sandor Lorand. (Allen and Unwin, 1950. vi + 251 pp.) Price (U.K.), 12s. 6d.

SUL PENSIERO DI A. CARLINI, ED ALTRI STUDI. By Gallo Galli. (Gheroni, Tornio, 1950. 334 pp.)

Includes articles on early Greek philosophy and on Descartes.

THE EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT AND INFLUENCE OF MATTHEW ARNOLD. By W. F. Connell. (Kegan Paul, 1950. xvi + 304 pp.) Price (U.K.), 21s.

REALITY AND MONADS. By A. Eyken. (Universitas, Apeldoorn, 1950. 47 pp.)

## NOTES AND NEWS

### AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY.

#### ANNUAL CONGRESS, 1951

THE Annual Congress for 1951 will be held at the University of Sydney from August 21 to 24. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 22.